

"I hope people will know about and recollect the humiliating history that has been nearly forgotten."

Page 13



"You can never predict what will appeal to the buyers."

Page 10



Go fly a kite, says Ha Yiqi, a fourth-generation kite maker.

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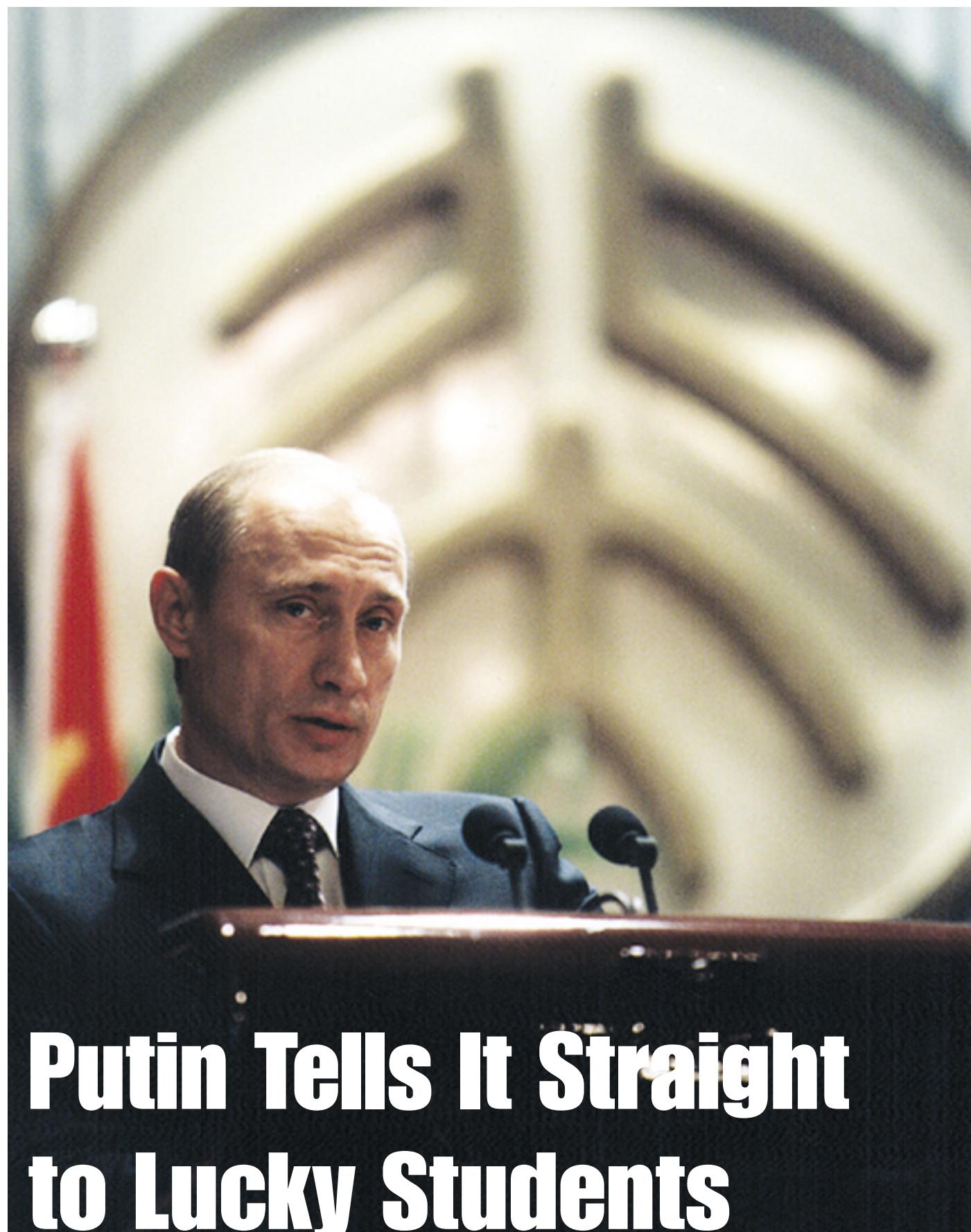
# BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY DECEMBER 6, 2002

NO. 82

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM



## Putin Tells It Straight to Lucky Students

By Cindy Lee

A heavy fog delayed a heavily anticipated speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin at Beijing University on Tuesday morning, but did not put a damper on the audience's enthusiasm about listening and posing questions to the leader.

When Putin stepped into the presentation hall one hour after schedule, accompanied by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, both were greeted by a lasting standing ovation.

Before the speech, the national media speculated about exactly what kinds of questions would be asked of Putin by the Beijing University students. Since former US President Bill Clinton delivered a speech and answered questions at the university in 1998, similar visits by other international VIPs have been seen as a way of gauging the intelligence and ability of the students at one of China's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher learning.

One day before Putin's speech, *Beijing Morning Post* ran a list of some possible questions culled from interviews with students. The response from one female student in the International Affairs School created a fuss, as she told a reporter that a pop song entitled "If you want to get married, marry a man like Putin" is popular in Russia now and she wanted

to see the charming president with her own eyes.

This student was lambasted by others for having "low standards" and "wasting a big chance," because the question and answer period was only to last 10 minutes.

The first of the three questions raised following the president's 20-minute speech was posed by Fan Yingchuan, a Russian major, who asked, "Our President, Jiang Zemin, knows a lot about Russian literature and he recited a whole Russian poem during his visit to Moscow University last year. So, how much do you know about Chinese literature and Chinese poetry?"

Putin's answer seemed to satisfy Fan and the rest of the audience. He started by expressing admiration for President Jiang's language abilities, not only in Russian, but also in English and Italian. "Many other leaders, not only myself, know about this and we all respect it," he said.

He continued by saying he was not as linguistically talented, but mentioned that his two daughters have studied Chinese martial arts and one is now learning the Chinese language. "It will be good to have a new source of information about China," Putin quipped to loud applause.

The second question came from Liu Jingming, a graduate

student focusing on economic law, who raised the issue of how to deal with conflicts between the interests of different groups during Russia's reform process.

Putin gave a lengthy reply, saying the most important thing is to guarantee the benefits of the whole nation and to improve people's standard of living. Moreover, the whole process of reform should be kept open and clear, which will encourage all of society to learn, understand and accept the changes.

"Even if a reform ends up failing, people in society can still learn from it," he said.

Japanese Department student Liu Hua was just able to squeeze in the third and final question, as the inquiry session ran past schedule. Liu asked what Putin and the Russian government think of NATO's development.

Regarding NATO's development, the Russian President said it is an organization created for one time and purpose, like the Warsaw Pact. "Both organizations worked for global peace. But now that the Warsaw Pact is defunct, NATO has to find something else to do," said Putin, getting some laughs from the audience.

"To be frank," he continued, "every country has its right to make its own choices. If some countries choose to be part of the West and think that is good to them, I can understand it."

Putin went on to acknowledge some disagreements between the US and his country,

and his country's relations with the United States.

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Students linger outside the presentation hall studying a book commemorating Putin's visit.



Students linger outside the presentation hall studying a book commemorating Putin's visit.

Photo by Wang Tianjian

## They're Playing Our Song

TCL Hit With Suit for Musical Copyright Violation

By Xiao Rong

In the midst of celebrating the strong sales of its mobile phones this year, TCL, one of China's leading electronics producers, never expected to get tangled in a copyright dispute.

The issue at hand is legal charges filed by the Music Copyright Society of China (MCSC) that the company used some musical works owned by society members as mobile phone rings.

The preliminary steps in the case, the first music copyright battle in the country, started last Tuesday in the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court. If TCL Mobile Communication Co. is found guilty, the company will face damage payments of up to 12 million yuan.

### Rings bring trouble

Word about TCL's musical infringement started to come into the Copyright Society this May, when some of its staff received complaints from consumers and some of the organization's members.

A total of 12 models of TCL mobile phones, including the Rambler 8388, Rich Man 8988, and Auspicious Man 8688, were found to have used the melodies of some famous contemporary Chinese musical pieces.

"The owners of the copyrights to all these famous musical works are members of our society, who have authorized the society to help protect their rights," said Fan Yu, vice director of the organization's Legal and License Department.

The society, established by the Chinese Musicians' Association and the National Copyright Administration of China on December 17, 1992, is the only officially recognized, non-profit collective administration for musical copyrights in the country.

"Every individual or organization that wants to use musical works under the protection of our administration should first receive a license from our society. But TCL didn't ask for our permission before putting these compositions into its mobile phones," added Fan.

She told *Beijing Today* that in an investigation conducted in Beijing between May and December, different TCL handsets were found to have illegally used a total of 107 copyrighted musical works.

The society proceeded to contact TCL Mobile Communication to arrange negotiations, but the electronics giant dragged its feet in responding and did not offer precise data as requested.

"Under such circumstances, we chose to file a lawsuit. We had hoped to be able to reach a mutual agreement with TCL to better protect the copyrights of our musical works," said Ma Jichao, director of the society's Legal and License Department.

### Surprise lawsuit

TCL has shown clear dissatisfaction with the unexpected lawsuit.

"We only learned about what was happening the same day we received the court's subpoena," said Huang Shengyou, chief Beijing representative of TCL Mobile.



An ad for the TCL "Lingyun" 3688 handset, one of the phones that triggered the copyright dispute.

Photo by Qu Liyan

Upon receiving that subpoena, he and the vice manager of the company immediately visited the society in hopes of getting them to canceling the suit.

"If the society wants to charge us money for the music pieces we have used, we're willing to sit down and talk about it. We would like to obey the law and pay for what we used in our rings. But why did they have to immediately take this issue to court?" said Huang.

In Fan Yu's view, however, there is no way the society will give up the lawsuit before some kind of preliminary agreement is reached between the two sides.

"We have always hoped that TCL could offer detailed information as to how many mobile phones they have sold in the past two years, so that we can work out how much they should have paid for using the music," she said.

Huang Shengyou responded by questioning the scope of the society's compensation demands. "I doubt the ways they used to reach the figure for how much we need to pay. Their method of calculation is simply ridiculous," he said.

Liu Ping, lawyer for the plaintiff, explained to *Beijing Today* how they reached the compensation claim. "According to public reports, a total of 1.2 million TCL handsets were sold last year and their sales goal this year is 6 million units, with actual sales of 4.3 million phones so far. So the minimum figure for their sales in the past two years should be at least 6 million."

"The National Copyright Administration has stipulated that punishment for copyright violation can be up to two to five times the amount of profits earned illegally."

Thus, multiplying the minimum estimate of handset sales, the charge per piece of music used and an average of just over eight musical works programmed into each TCL handset, and then doubling the result, yields a final compensation figure of 12.84 million yuan.

"Establishing exact figures for illegal profits earned has always been a thorny problem in copyright disputes, so sometimes it requires cooperation and detailed information from the defendant to find the proper number," Huang added.

Fan said, "Our intention is not to single out TCL for punishment, but to arouse general public awareness of the need for obeying copyright laws. It's pretty common for music copyrights to be ignored in the mobile phone industry."

(To be continued on Page 3)

## City Calls for Chinglish Checks

By Shan Jinliang

Starting this week, the city government, in conjunction with *Beijing Today*, is extending invitations to residents and visitors to offer corrections to errors on bilingual signs at 60 major scenic spots around the city.

The move is being led by the Beijing Tourism Administration and Beijing Foreign Affairs Office with the intention of removing often obvious errors on Chinese-English materials, commentaries and signs.

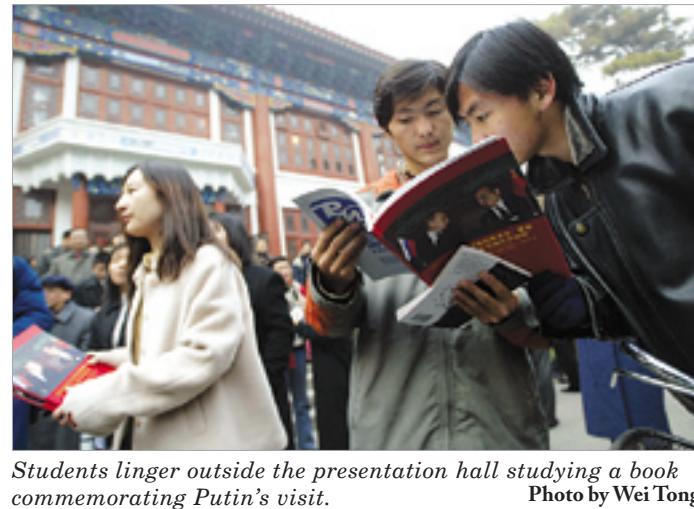
The campaign kicked off on December 1 and will last until May 31 next year. An administration committee will then select which signs to work on and

issue corrected versions on July 15.

*Beijing Today* welcomes corrections, which can be sent in by email to bjtoday@ynet.com, by fax to 6590-2525, or by letter to: Beijing Today, Room 1809, Beijing Youth Daily Building, 23-A Baijiazhuan Dongli, Chaoyang District, Beijing (100026).

All entries must include the following information: name, gender, telephone number, company or organization of employment, name of the scenic spot, location of the sign or commentary in question, the Chinese version (preferred, but optional), the original English version and the corrected version.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI



Students linger outside the presentation hall studying a book commemorating Putin's visit.

Photo by Wei Tong

# Beijing Promises an Economical Olympics

By Xiao Rong

The Beijing Organizing Committee of the 2008 Olympic Games announced Wednesday it has a receptive attitude towards the low-cost principle of hosting a best ever Games.

"Post-games utilization and economy will be our guideline to follow the basic requirements of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)," said Jiang Xiaoyu, vice president of the Organizing Committee, during a press conference at the end of a three-day full meeting of the IOC Coordination Commission.

Beijing will probably reduce the scale of the proposed equestrian course and shooting range, and build one baseball stadium instead of the two originally planned, revealed Hein Verbruggen, president of the IOC Coordination Commission.

A final decision on the proposed changes will not be made until after the 2004 Athens Games and would not have an unfavorable effect on the Beijing Games, said IOC sports director Gilbert Felli.

Verbruggen welcomed Beijing's efforts to accept the principle of lower cost and less venue



Hein Verbruggen Xinhua Photo

capacity proposed at the 114th IOC session in Mexico.

The IOC Coordination Commission held a full meeting here between December 2 and 4, the first since the city was awarded the Games in July 2001. The Beijing Organizers presented their progresses on the themes of venue construction, marketing, sports, environment, Olympic village and athletes' services, communications, accommodation and technology.

"We have been impressed by the quality of the preparation work," commented Verbruggen.

He said solid foundations had

been laid down during this first year and the Beijing organizers had clearly identified the tasks to be accomplished next year.

"The focus of our next work will be the completion of the Beijing Olympic Action Plan outlining the urban infrastructures, services and logistic support for the Games," said Jiang Xiaoyu.

The marketing program will be launched next May, following the unveiling of the emblem for the Games and the international bidding for design and construction of major Olympic venues, Jiang added.

## Olympic Project Bid Papers in Hot Demand

By Xiao Rong

A total of 81 domestic and foreign companies are competing for the construction rights for seven key projects of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

The potential bidders had purchased 187 tendering documents during the first stage between October 28 and November 30, the city planning commission announced on Monday.

Of the seven stadiums and gymnasium projects invited for international bids, the National Gymnasium and Olympic Village ranked the first, with 44 bidding papers sold out. The National Sports Stadium was the second most popular with 39 purchased.

"Some of the enterprises who bought the bidding papers are alliances formed by investing, managing, and construction companies so as to be more qualified for the fierce competition," said Liu Zhi, vice director of the Beijing Development Planning Commission.

"We are really surprised by the globalization of the bidding activity, which demonstrates the confidence of enterprises home and abroad in the prospects of the Beijing Olympics," said Liu.

The names of the companies cannot be disclosed, according to Liu, as they signed a confidentiality document with the planning commission when buying the bid papers.

The 81 potential bidders that intend to participate in the final competition should submit their tendering document by December 28, after which an evaluation panel consists of domestic and foreign specialists will choose the final candidates by the end of next January.

## Overseas Study for Zhongguancun Managers

By Shan Jinliang

Zhongguancun Science Park Managing Committee announced last week it will arrange training for 100 top-performing entrepreneurs and senior company managers at top international universities over the coming three years.

The program, part of the Zhongguancun Human Resources Plan, will also train software engineers, technology brokers, foreign-related law staff familiar with WTO rules, marketing, and financial investment staff. These areas have been identified as those most in need of qualified senior staff, according to recent surveys on human resources at the park.

The program is primarily intended to enhance the management ability of senior managers of the park's companies, says Wang Liping, chief of the managing committee's Human Resources Department.

According to Wang, the plan will be implemented from early next year, with around 30 people annually receiving overseas training. "We are now getting in contact with the universities to work out the lessons and choose preferred teachers," he said.

According to Wang, the committee has already been in contact with Stanford and Maryland universities in the US. Stanford is likely to prove a popular choice, as it is close to Silicon Valley, giving participants the opportunity to learn from the advanced management techniques used by companies there.

## EU-China Junior Managers Celebrate Their Future

By Zhao Hongyi

Nearly 90 junior European managers, trained in the art of doing business in China and with varying degrees of fluency in Chinese, gathered in Beijing last Friday and Saturday to discuss China's evolving market and celebrate their success studying in China. The two day event featured talks by prominent Chinese and foreign government and business representatives.

This was the first gathering of the alumni of European managers, graduates of the one-year training courses under the EU-China Junior Managers Program. The program, sponsored by the European Union from 1998-2003, is coming to the end of its first phase.

Over 140 European young managers participated in the training courses, involving Chinese language studies in Beijing and internships in Chinese companies and joint ventures.

"After five years, it is wonderful to see that these European managers have maintained a strong interest in developing Sino-European ties," said association president Manuel Herranz Martin.

The second phase of the program is awaiting approval by the European Union, according to Sile O'Brien, a graduate of the program.

## 2010 World Expo to Accelerate Shanghai's Development

Celebrations spread across China Tuesday night following the announcement that Shanghai had won the right to host the 2010 World Expo.

The landmark vote of the 132nd General Assembly of the Bureau of International Expositions makes China the first developing country ever to host the event, first held in London 151 years ago.

The World Expo is an opportunity for participating countries to present and exchange social, economic, cultural and scientific

achievements, and also helps to enhance new technology and concepts. The selection of Shanghai as host will help to raise the city's living standards.

Hosting the World Expo will give the high-speed metropolis a new challenging project to push it forward, as it will be forced to rapidly complete its transformation into a world center of economy, trade, finance and transportation — a process which will also help the economic development of the Yangtze River triangle region and

lower reaches.

Chen Liangyu, mayor of Shanghai, said that Shanghai's hosting of the exposition will not only benefit the city and China, but many other countries, adding that the ultimate goal of Shanghai's bid for the World Expo was to introduce China to the whole world.

By the year 2010, Shanghai expects to welcome its guests with a clear, clean and beautiful environment to embody its bidding theme of "better city, better life."

(Xinhua)



Xinhua Photo

## From Geography to Environmental Sciences

By Ema Ma

A celebration was held last week to mark the establishment of the Environmental Sciences College of Beijing University. The new college is based on the original Geography Department, and follows the international trend of universities changing the name of their Earth and Geography Sciences to Environmental Sciences or City and Resources.

The chief reasons for the change are said to relate to placement considerations and adaptation to the rapid expansion of geography's domain.

Although prescribed as one of the required courses in middle school

in China, geography is still a puzzle for most of the public. It is often confused with geology, one of the branches of geography, which deals with the history of the earth and its life recorded in rocks.

Geographers are often, mistakenly, described as "people who deal with rocks." This misunderstanding has led to difficulties in recruitment and employment, and it is expected that the change to a more attractive sounding name will lead to an increase in student numbers and assist graduates find jobs more easily, although the syllabus remains the same.

Another reason for the change relates to the fact that the range

of the study of geography has been expanded to an unprecedented scale in recent years. Urbanization brings about the study on the city and resources, while the extinction of species invites scientists' attention to geo-ecology. Facing the progressive deterioration of our environment, the study of geography is becoming more and more important.

"We should strengthen the popularization of geography in the future. Such a change would have been unnecessary if everyone knew what geography really was," suggested professor Mo Duowen from the Environmental Sciences College.

## Red Tape Cut for Hiring Expats

By Ema Ma

As of the beginning of this month, employment formalities for expatriates and residents from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao have been simplified.

According to a notice issued by the Beijing Labor Bureau, for those who satisfy certain prerequisites, no employment license is needed, and the employer can apply for an employment permit directly.

Furthermore, there is no longer a requirement for an employer who intends to employ an overseas Chinese person or a foreigner to certify that the post is one of "special need," that is, it cannot be filled by any domestic candidate.

## WWF Launches English Website

By Li Chao

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) China Program Office recently launched its English website as a support tool for its conservation initiatives in China.

China boasts a greater diversity of wild plants and animals than all of North America or Europe, and is home to one-eighth of all the species on earth.

The earth's highest and lowest points are in Chinese territory, and it has a variety of ecosystems that are unequalled elsewhere, from glaciers to coral reefs and from deserts to tropical rainforests.

Conserving China's biological treasures is the focus of WWF China Program Office's work.

"WWF hopes to raise awareness about China's tremendous biological diversity, and generate support for conservation of China's natural heritage. The website will also be a reliable tool for journalists, and a networking tool to share information about ongoing projects," said Jim Harkness, chief representative of the WWF China Program Office.

The website aims to provide the media and the public with timely and comprehensive information about China's most relevant environmental issues, as well as background information and current facts on major eco-regions, wildlife, wetlands, forests, and climate change.

## New Oriental and ELLIS Open English Training Center

By Xiao Rong

With the opening of the New Oriental-ELLIS English Learning Center Wednesday, China's leading language-training institution, New Oriental Education Group, is marching into the advanced English training market.

The establishment of the center follows the signing of a strategic cooperation agreement between New Oriental and ELLIS (English Language Learning Instructional System) this May.

Focusing on the advanced English training market, the two companies are jointly promoting English training software, textbooks and teaching materials in the field of Children's English, Adult English and Business English.

"By partnering with New Oriental School, we are definitely doing the right thing at the right time, with a common goal to deliver the most advanced and highly qualified English training," said ELLIS CEO David Rees at Wednesday's opening ceremony.

ELLIS boasts over 30 years of experience in teaching English to non-native speakers, with its core strength in the multi-media English teaching program.

"We believe it is high time to introduce a world renowned teaching system to China," said Hu Min, CEO of New Oriental Education Group.

"We are creating a unique New Oriental way to promote to thousands of clients our high quality service in the advanced English training market. But the transformation doesn't mean our totally giving up the English exam training market," Hu stressed.

Both sides emphasized the possibility of expanding this type of the training center and business model to other cities throughout China.

# Local Banks to Be Left Behind in Online Revolution?

By Wang Xu / Zhao Hongyi

Overseas banks have been pouring into China this year, and now local banks and financial institutions have another concern: the issue of patents.

At a seminar held earlier this week in Beijing, domestic experts warned that overseas banks and financial institutions have been applying for an increasing number of patent registrations for their service products, particularly those related to online banking service products and technologies.

A new survey conducted by the US-based Pew Research Center indicates the popularity of online banking is growing rapidly in the US and now has about 37 million customers. It's expected to see rapid growth around the world in the next decade. The worry is that because Chinese banks have to license the necessary technology from the western companies who have developed it, if these companies patent the technology it will make it impossible for Chinese banks to compete in the online banking market.

"The critical point is that once under patent protection, these online service products and technologies cannot be used by any other counterpart without permission and copyright fees," said an official from the State Intellectual Property Office. "Otherwise, you will be fined, which means a big loss and market marginalization."

At the Intellectual Property Office's website, all applications for patent registration are listed for public consultation. Citibank has submitted 19 applications, while Chase Manhattan has submitted six and Japan's Rolier Banking Equipment Co. has submitted 38, mostly for the pro-



Photo by Photocome

tection of advanced banking equipment and facilities.

Under China's patent laws, the first patent registration applicant will obtain protection after one and a half years of public consultation, as long as no objection is raised.

The Intellectual Property Office received the first batch of patent applications from overseas banks and financial institutions between 1997 and 2000, which means most of the patents will soon have to be signed over.

"The number is increasing as foreign banks are preparing to promote more service products

through their market access," the official warned.

Overseas banks are claiming the patent applications are standard business practice aimed at protecting their interests, particularly when entering a new market.

But their Chinese counterparts do not see it the same way.

"We are really shocked by all the applications," admitted Guan Cunhua, an officer of China Merchants Bank, one of the major commercial banks in China.

Merchants is the first local bank to promote and provide online banking services in China. Guan

admitted, "most of the technologies and services were introduced directly from our counterparts in the overseas banking industry."

So far, the four largest Chinese commercial banks have forwarded only 11 patent applications which cover mostly low-tech tools used in banks, such as fake notes readers, safeties and Y2K solutions. They're not up to speed with the online revolution yet, so they must rely on cooperation with foreign banks.

One solution for Chinese banks, as Guan admitted, is pretty obvious: to design new advanced financial service products for themselves.

## Boeing Responds to Airbus Impact

By Shan Jinliang

David Wang, who became Boeing's first president of Chinese descent when he was made president of Boeing China two weeks ago, made his public debut on Tuesday, which also happened to be the thirtieth anniversary of Boeing's entry into China. He announced the firm would make further efforts to localize its staff and products.

Wang, the former chairman of GE China, takes over at a crucial stage as Boeing's biggest rival, Airbus, has been making impressive strides. Airbus recently announced its total orders for 2001 amounted to 1,575 airplanes, greater than Boeing's orders for the second year running. Airbus has seized 30 percent of the Chinese market.

The 58-year-old new president has been working in China for over seven years and used to be president of GE Malaysia/Singapore. His fluency in English, Mandarin and Cantonese was one factor behind his selection by Boeing.

On the first day of his new career, Airbus held an air security



David Wang, new president of Boeing China

seminar with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) in Beihai, Guangxi Autonomous Region, a reminder of the three Boeing planes destroyed in air crashes in China early this year.

Like Boeing, Airbus has recognized the Asia Pacific region as one of the top three markets in the world, the others being Europe and North America. But Airbus

has made more dynamic strides in showing its commitment to its Asia/Pacific business.

The Europe-based conglomerate had two subsidiaries in America and Japan and it decided to add a third by establishing one in China. Airbus also appointed two vice presidents who were born in China. In 2001, the company appointed as president Guy Mcleod who had worked for Airbus China for five years. He said, "We are trying to be as localized as possible, and I am trying to learn Chinese."

Boeing has trained 15,000 Chinese air staff in the past 10 years. Airbus started to train air staff in the Beijing Zhong'ou Aviation Training and Assistance Center from 1997 and had trained over 5,000 people by the end of last year.

Airbus said at least a quarter of its airplane parts are already made in Chinese factories. The figure is the same for Boeing, which entered China in 1972, 13 years earlier than Airbus.

Airbus has also sought to deep-

en its cooperation with the Chinese aerospace industry in recent years by opening some joint programs with Chinese parts companies. Most of Boeing's joint programs in China concluded in the 1980s and 1990s.

Airbus has enlarged its market share in China (including Hong and Macao) from 13 percent in 1995 to 28 percent in 2002 in terms of aircraft in operation and orders to be handled. However, Boeing China claims 392 of the 605 jet planes owned by Chinese airlines, or 65 percent, are made by Boeing.

At the Zhuhai Airshow early last month, Boeing and Airbus both commented that China will become the second commercial largest airplane market after North America by 2020.

Boeing predicted China will need 1,912 more airplanes in the next two decades. Its predictions have always been considered authoritative and credible. But the company has yet to offer a prediction on who will be the big winner in China's aviation market.

## China Comfort Travel Launches Management Buyout

By Tony Shaw

Seventy-eight senior managers from China Comfort Travel (CCT) purchased 49 percent of the shares in CCT on November 26. A number of tourism companies said they would follow suit and experts say it could represent the new development trend of China's tourism industry. It is also the country's first management buyout (MBO) for a large-scale state-owned tourism enterprise.

Though Li Jilie, general manager of CCT, denied the MBO was prompted by the impending entry of foreign companies into China, the move has been seen as an effort by the company to strengthen itself before foreign travel agencies are permitted to enter China in 2005.

"The most important resources for CCT, a service company, are hu-

man," Li told *Beijing Today*, "and the initial purpose for the reform is to inspire the staff and gather the best staff from around China."

Li said the main problem for staff enthusiasm in a state-owned enterprise is the nebulous leadership structure. The MBO reform will make it clearer who's in charge of the company as well as giving staff a stake in its success.

Established in 1984, CCT was invested in by the National Tourism Administration and Beijing Tourism Group and has become a leading travel agency. In the mid-1990s there was a transformation in China's industrial structure with state capital being gradually withdrawn. In 1999, CCT experimented with a new shareholding system in its 26 wholly funded subsidiaries. It was an MBO in which CCT retained a 51 percent

stake in the subsidiaries while the general managers and department managers took the rest.

After the MBO, the number of money-losing subsidiaries was cut from 30 percent to five percent.

Following this success, CCT

launched its latest MBO this September, which was completed late last month.

The transformation received applause from the management level of the company, although lower level employees were not quite so enthusiastic. Some are now concerned about their futures. CCT deputy general manager Dong Ruping said they are sure to feel higher pressure as they can now be fired by the company. While CCT was an entirely state-owned enterprise, it was much harder for this to happen.

CCT's move is expected to prompt a wave of state ownership transformation among Chinese travel agencies. China Travel Service Group general manager Jiang Wei said it was an exciting time for the industry. His company is considering launching an MBO in order to inspire the staff.

Dai Bin, a tourism expert from China Tourism Institute said it was the death knell for state-ownership of tourism companies and a new beginning in the development of the industry. "It will improve corporate governance and innovation, and grant companies the long-term ability to develop themselves," Dai said.

Li said the current travel agency regulations did not stipulate the size of the stake in companies that had to be retained by the state, but that the state would probably have to remain the largest shareholder for the time being.

## Joining Hands on Bad Assets

By Hou Mingxin

On December 3, China Huarong Asset Management Company announced in Beijing that it has received approval from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation to establish two Sino-foreign joint ventures.

Huarong can now form two asset management companies with international investment banking companies to dispose of its large amount of non-performing assets which it took over from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China several years ago.

"It marks a breakthrough in the handling of China's non-performing loans. Until now, most bad loans have been sold through public auction and public bidding," said Yang Kaisheng, president of Huarong.

The First United Asset Management Company is one of the newly approved joint ventures. Huarong's partner in this venture will be an international investment banking group including Morgan Stanley, Lehman Brothers, Salomon Smith Barney and KTH Invest-

ments. It will take charge of four packages of bad loans amounting to 10.8 billion yuan from 254 companies in 18 provinces of China.

The other new company is Rongsheng Asset Management Company, in which Huarong's partner is Goldman Sachs. The firm will be responsible for a package of bad loans worth 1.97 billion yuan, covering 44 companies in 13 provinces.

Asset management, transfers, exchanges, sales, restructuring and debt collection will be the primary business of the two companies. They will not be allowed to provide lending, deposits, settlements or direct investment. Providing debt-to-equity swaps, Huarong's main business, will not be an option for the joint ventures either.

Huarong is now planning another international bid to dispose of part of its bad loans in 2003.

"We are now in the preparatory process for the public bidding. Although I can not tell you the exact amount of non-performing loans now, I believe it will be similar to the first time (over 10 billion yuan)," said Yang.

## Vivendi Moves into Beijing Water Services

By Ema Ma

Beijing Capital Co., Ltd announced a new joint venture with Vivendi Water on December 2nd, 2002. Beijing Capital Co. will hold a 51 percent stake and Vivendi will hold the remaining 49 percent. The two partners have cooperated on water services since November 2001. The new company will be China's first water services joint venture with foreign investment.

Beijing Capital Co. is a Shanghai listed company mainly engaged in public utilities. Its main business is investing in, constructing, operating and managing profitable infrastructure projects in Beijing. Its main asset, Gaobeidian Sewage Treatment Plant, is one of the biggest sewage treatment plants in Beijing. The daily capacity is 500 thousand tons, occupying 40 percent of the market share. As more and more attention is paid to environmental protection, the company will put special emphasis on the municipality water supply and waste-water treatment.

Vivendi Water, with 150

years' history, is one of the three biggest international water services companies. With operations all over the world, Vivendi Water has accumulated rich experience in designing, construction and operation of water treatment systems.

The boom in water services in China reflects the rapid development of city construction and the increasing market-orientation in infrastructure. In order to move on from inefficient monopolization and realize the commercialized operation of water services, lots of cities within China have attempted to introduce foreign investment with the advanced management and technology skills.

"The cooperation with Vivendi Water will certainly enhance management skills and the technology of our water services. The joint venture will devote itself to waste water treatment and the water supply in Beijing in order to provide reliable infrastructure for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing," said Mr. Liu Xiaoguang, the president of Beijing Capital Co.

## TCL Case

(Continued from page 1)  
Pushing for greater industry awareness

According to Fan, many other mobile phone makers have been found to have made similar transgressions, although TCL's case is the most serious to date. However, she said she was unable to reveal the name of other companies that had violated the society's copyrights.

"Actually, after we contacted those handset producers to warn them about infringing our copyrights, most of them showed understanding and began to consider gaining licenses from the society for the use of protected musical works as mobile phone rings," she said.

Of the dozens of mobile phone producers operating nationwide, only three, Motorola, Amoisonic, and Zhongdian Telecommunications, have formally signed contracts with the society to pay for the use of protected musical compositions.

"Using popular music as mobile phone rings as well as downloading music from the Internet has exploded in the past two years, so most handset producers aren't even

aware they should pay to use protected pieces. But if the society takes such strict legal action to fight it, they could do serious harm to the whole mobile phone manufacturing industry," said Huang Shengyou.

To avoid similar copyright disputes in the future, Huang said TCL may begin looking for safer ways to use musical pieces as ring tones, or simply leave the composition of ring tones to mobile phone customers themselves.

"We encourage mobile phone companies to pay in advance for the music pieces they plan to use, because that will give them more flexibility in making their choices. If they think some pieces are expensive, they can use classical compositions or those that are public and not protected by copyrights," said Fan.

She also appealed for the promotion of copyright law in China so that more companies in the mobile phone manufacturing industry will realize the importance of music copyright protection, which will benefit both themselves and copyright owners.

# US Rejects United Bid, Bankruptcy Inevitable

Analysts believe US civil aviation industry stuck in the middle of winter

CHICAGO, Dec. 4 (Reuters) - United Airlines failed on Wednesday to secure a \$1.8 billion US government loan guarantee, pushing the No. 2 airline to the brink of filing for bankruptcy.

Sources familiar with the matter told Reuters late on Wednesday that United was prepared to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection as soon as it can line up \$1.5 billion in debtor-in-possession financing.

The Air Transportation Stabilization Board, set up to help airlines struggling financially after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, voted 2-to-1 to reject United's loan guarantee bid.

The board concluded that United's revenue projections were unreasonably optimistic and its costs still too high. It also expressed "substantial concern" with underfunded pensions and how much the company's assets were worth.

The airline is still allowed to change its business plan and ask for reconsideration, a federal official said. But the plan that was rejected had been hammered out after months of negotiations with United's labor unions.

The board would also consider giving the airline exit financing upon its emergence from bankruptcy court, said Daniel Montgomery, executive director of the board.

(Kathy Fieweger)

## Analysts' Take:

### Yu Dongyun, public communications adviser for United Airlines

*The depression of the global economy has forced companies to cut their expenditures, inevitably reducing the number of potential customers for United's flights, whose major customers are from the business world.*

*The fact that two United planes were among those hijacked on September 11 has also had an impact on the company's image.*

*United has \$2 billion of loans due to pay back in the fourth quarter of this year. The airline needs a credit guarantee of \$1.8 billion from the Air Transportation Stabilization Board. Under the request of the Board, United is conducting a thorough internal survey of its assets, balance of income and expenditures. Discussion with the workers' union for possible wage cuts and lay offs is a part of that internal survey. This caused the latest rumors of United's possible bankruptcy.*

**Chen Baoshen, senior researcher, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**

*The September 11 terrorist attacks and the down turn of the world economy have caused United Airlines' market to shrink.*

*At the same time, having to employ additional security forces and install new secu-*



An unidentified United Airlines crewmember walks past a Christmas tree at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport Tuesday, December 3. United announced that it will lay off 352 pilots beginning Jan. 6, 2003, as part of its plan to decrease its flying schedule next year.

(AP Photo)

rity facilities increased the company's costs.

*Like many other US-based airlines, United had a prosperous 1990's, in which its staff and their wages increased rapidly.*

*Even though United has reached a*

wage-cutting plan with its workers and has obtained badly needed loans, the company is not yet in the blue. The future of United Airlines and the US' whole civil aviation industry still rests on economic recovery and the world's battle against terrorism.

*The civil aviation industry is experiencing a real winter at present. In the fall of this year, US Airways filed a bankruptcy appeal to the federal court. Two months ago, American Airline and United, the two largest air carriers in the US and the world, cut 20,000 jobs each.*

**Cao Siyuan, Beijing Siyuan Legal Office of Mergers and Acquisitions**

*According to US laws, a company at the brink of bankruptcy has two possibilities before it. One is to obtain a credit guarantee from the federal government for commercial loans. The second is to file for bankruptcy.*

*The US federal government evaluates whether or not a company's bankruptcy will impact the stability of all of society and whether a company has the ability and the will to save itself.*

*In the second case, a company needs to file a bankruptcy appeal with the local or federal court, which can postpone deadlines for debt repayment by three to six months. In this period, the company can still operate, but its reputation will be damaged and its prospects quite dim.*

## Bush Considers New SEC Chairman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 (AP) - White House officials confirmed President Bush is considering candidates for the leader of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Harvey Pitt, former SEC chairman, resigned one month ago under pressure for various missteps in handling the accounting scandals that began with the bankruptcy of Enron Corp.

The officials said Bush could settle on a nominee as early as this month. Whoever he picks will have to be confirmed by the Senate after what promises to be careful scrutiny by lawmakers.

(Sandra Sobieraj)

## MCI Boosts Bills for Third time

Dec. 4 (USA Today) - As WorldCom struggles to emerge from bankruptcy protection, its 20 million MCI customers will see higher charges as of January 1.

The new charges for the US' No. 2 long-distance phone company mark the third set of increases since it filed for bankruptcy protection in July.

"People need to watch their bills," says Rich Sayers, editor of 10-10PhoneRates.com. "Some companies are going to follow these MCI increases."

Consumer groups blasted the increases, saying customers are paying for WorldCom's woes. WorldCom says the rises are necessary based on market trends and to recover costs of making payments to the federal funds.

(Andrew Backover)

## Fewer Companies Cover Pension Liabilities

WASHINGTON, November 25 (Watson Wyatt Worldwide) - The stock market's steady decline is expected to force US companies to contribute billions of dollars into their pension plans in the next several years to address funding shortfalls and comply with federal laws that protect workers' pensions.

Only about 15 percent of employers made pension plan contributions in 2000, and that number increased to about 25 percent in 2001, according to research by Watson Wyatt. For the current year, Watson Wyatt estimates that about 30 percent of the plans will require contributions and, if current market conditions persist, that number could more than double to 65 percent in 2003.

Meanwhile, as asset values have declined, liabilities have soared and fewer companies have sufficient funds to fully cover their pension liabilities. In fact, Watson Wyatt research shows that only about 40 percent of pension plans had assets in excess of plan liabilities as of January 1, 2002, down from about 85 percent in 2000. If current economic conditions persist, it is likely that only about one-fifth of plans will have sufficient funds to fully cover liabilities in 2003.

### Analysts' Take:

#### Nie Mingjun, director, Social Insurance Center, Ministry of Labor and Social Security

*China's pension funds consist of three parts: a national fund from the central government's budget, payments by employers, and payments by individuals.*

*Only the government fund can be put into the stock market to increase its value, and that can only be done to a modest extent. For example, the fund purchased 30 million initial shares issued by China Petrochemicals last month.*

*But employers' and individuals' payments can only be deposited in banks and used to purchase state bonds. The purpose of that policy is to prevent the devaluation of pension funds in markets, which would create a lot of trouble.*

*All Chinese enterprises, including state-owned, foreign-funded and private enterprises, are required by law to pay pensions for their employees on schedule and completely.*

*The central government has an independent branch for monitoring and supervising payments made by enterprises, which uses administrative and media power to strictly enforce the legal requirements. Those companies that decline to pay pensions in time will receive warnings and be publicly named in the media. Plus, the senior management teams of such companies can be sacked, if needed.*

*Enterprises in bad trouble are allowed to delay their pension payments for less than one year with the approval of the central and local governments. Since 1998, delayed pension payments have remained stable.*

*A big problem is that we have not yet drafted laws and regulations to supervise the millions of township enterprises nationwide, which have frequent changes in staff, most of whom come from rural areas. In these township enterprises, employees have minimal or even no pension coverage.*

### IBM Says Will Fully Fund Pension Plan

NEW YORK, Dec. 4 (Reuters) - International Business Machines Corp. on Wednesday said that it would close a \$3 billion gap in its underfunded pension fund by the end of 2002 instead of over the next three years.

IBM's pension fund benefited from a surge in stocks in the 1990s, but the market's decline over the past two years has hit its overall value. The stock market's rise in recent months had helped close some of the gap.

Although the fund has not fallen to a level where regulators will force the company to contribute to the fund, IBM Chief Financial Officer John Joyce said it was in the interest of employees, retirees and shareholders to restore its funding.

IBM is one of many companies with pension funds whose assets have sharply depreciated. General Motors Corp. said earlier this year that it could face underfunding in its US plan of more than \$20 billion by the end of the year, while Ford Motor Co.'s underfunding totals about \$5 billion.

(Caroline Humer)

## American Plans Flight Attendant Layoffs

DALLAS, Dec. 4 (AP) - American Airlines will trim 1,100 flight attendants in the coming months as it prepares to operate fewer flights next spring.

American has about 21,000 active attendants. The world's largest carrier said the cutbacks would leave capacity 18.6 percent below its March 2001 level, before the terror attacks and the full effect of the weak economy befall the industry.

(Jamie Stengle)

## AOL Lowers Guidance as Ad Sales Fall

NEW YORK, Dec. 4 (USA Today) - AOL Time Warner executives upstaged their long-awaited presentation of plans to turn around America Online by disclosing Tuesday that ad sales at the troubled online service will fall in 2003, driving cash flow down as much as 25 percent.

America Online CEO Jonathan Miller told analysts that "2003 is the year we bottom out. After 2003, we see ourselves on track to achieve growth."

Driving the turnaround effort is a commitment to reposition AOL for Web users willing to pay an extra monthly fee for beefed up information, entertainment, shopping and communications services.

Eventually, America Online will become "the growth driver for all AOL Time Warner businesses," CEO Richard Parsons said.

(David Lieberman)

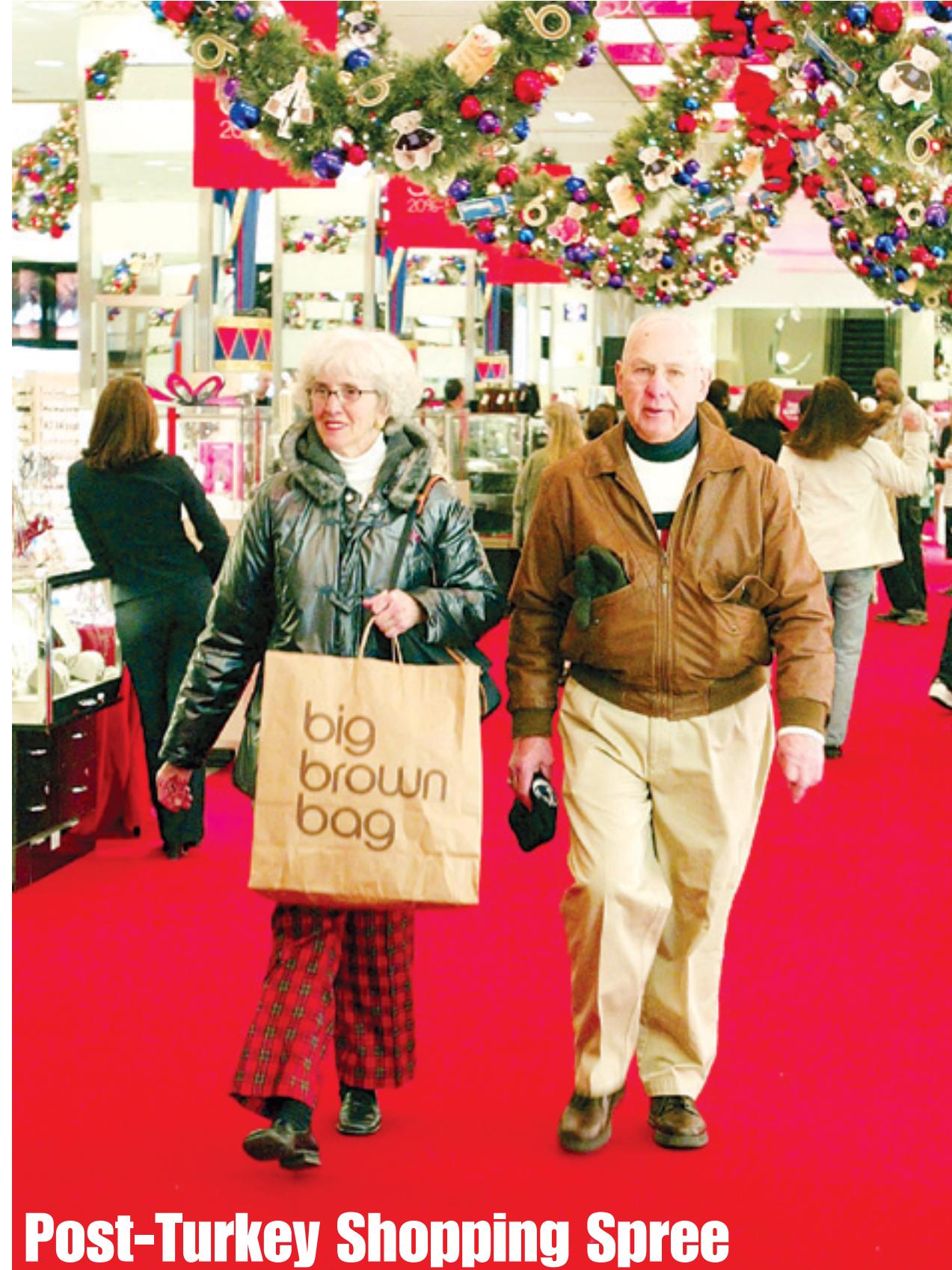
## Chapter 11 for Burger King Franchisee

CHICAGO/LONDON, Dec. 4 (Reuters) - AmeriKing Inc., one of the largest Burger King franchisees, said on Wednesday it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, casting another shadow on Burger King parent Diageo Plc's plans to sell the world's second biggest burger chain.

Recent industry pressures have led to a current price war in the US between No. 1 fast-food chain McDonald's, Burger King and other US chains. In such an environment, AmeriKing's Chapter 11 filing did not come as a surprise and will not derail a sale, said sources close to the situation.

AmeriKing lists its assets at \$223.39 million and its liabilities at \$291.79 million.

(Deborah Cohen and David Jones)



## Post-Turkey Shopping Spree

Two shoppers leave Bloomingdale's in New York City after holiday shopping, November 29, 2002. The day after Thanksgiving, known by retailers as 'Black Friday' because of the big profits, is one of the year's busiest shopping days.

### FEER Finds Confidence And Optimism In China's Future

HONG KONG, November 28 (Far East Economic Review) - In growing numbers, Chinese urbanites are optimistic about China's economic future, according to the first in a three-part series published December 5 announcing the results of the Far Eastern Economic Review's fifth China's Elite survey.

The survey shows how business savvy individuals have emerged in large numbers in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

"One of the most notable traits of these Chinese urbanites is their confidence," Mr. Nury Vittachi, China's Elite report writer, said. "They are

upbeat about the future and are convinced that the PRC economy will continue to grow."

Some of the key findings in Part I of the survey include:

\*57 percent of people working in Beijing put their career before family. By comparison, 51 percent of respondents in Guangzhou and 48 percent of people in Shanghai said the same.

\*Three out of four people surveyed believed the PRC economy would perform better in the months ahead.

Respondents in Beijing were the most bullish about China's future.

Some 29 percent of the people surveyed believed that China's economy

would perform "much better" in the next 12 months. In responding to the same question, just under a quarter in Shanghai and only 15 percent in Guangzhou believed the same.

\*More than half said that their companies had benefited from China's accession to the WTO, although 12 percent of people employed by local mainland companies said they felt negative effects.

\*94 percent of people under the age of 35 used computers regularly, but the number falls for older people.

\*People under 35 years were less likely to invest in the stock market than were older respondents.



She Youzhi at the memorial temple and tomb of Yuan Chonghuan

Photo by Lily

## Tomb Guardian Treasures Family Commitment

By Zhao Pu

With a mixture of tears and gratification, She Youzhi has seen the completion of the renovation of the memorial temple and tomb of Yuan Chonghuan. After 24 years lobbying, the work is complete, but that means a sad end to her family's centuries-old promise to guard the tomb.

The temple of the valiant Ming Dynasty general Yuan Chonghuan was reopened to the public last Friday after a five-month renovation. As the 17th generation guardian to his tomb, 63-year-old She expressed her gladness at last week's opening ceremony.

At the same time, she spoke of her grief at leaving the general's grave, which she described as a betrayal to her family's hereditary oath to protect and care for his tomb.

The story of the general and the She family dates back to 1630. Yuan, a general responsible for the defense of the Ming frontiers, was executed by Emperor Chongzhen, who wrongly believed him to be a traitor. She Youzhi's unnamed ancestor, one of Yuan's loyal subordinates, secretly stole the decapitated head of the wronged general and buried it under the courtyard of his own house. He

tended this grave for the rest of his life and swore an oath that his descendants would continue the practice.

For nearly four centuries, 17 generations kept their forefather's pledge and loyally guarded the tomb until this June, when the renovation began and She Youzhi and her family moved out of the temple, together with 18 other households. *Beijing Today* covered the story in its June 7, 2002 issue, in which She Youzhi bid a reluctant farewell to the tomb and her family's guardian career.

Her family moved to an apart-

ment at Jinyuchi, several kilometers away, from where she and her husband return several times a week to clean and take care of the tomb and temple.

She Youzhi was named "life-long consultant" of the memorial temple, but she still holds out the hope she will be able to move back to the general's tomb, to carry on her family's historic commitment. "This is a special family legacy for us. It is much more valuable than land and houses. What I inherited from my ancestors is not just a guardian career, but also the nation's spirit of integrity and patriotism."

## Virtual Forbidden City

By Chen Ying

Visitors to the Forbidden City can now get a close-up look at the gargoyle, or survey the view of Taihe Hall from the emperors' throne.

Thanks to the Forbidden City's Digital Institute, people can now take a cyber tour of the imperial palace. Thousands visit the museum every day. But a number of buildings are closed to tourists, as a protective measure.

In order to make the Forbidden City more accessible to more people, the Palace Museum Digital Institute was set up this August, with the aim of using virtual reality technology to create a cyber Forbidden City. Work has now been completed on the Taihe Hall, where the emperor used to interview his officials.

A special theatre to screen the virtual reality programs is to be completed next June. When it is finished, visitors will be able to not only enjoy a closer look at the 720,000-square-meter palace, but also the one million odd artworks and antiques collected by the museum.

## Murder At Home

By Lily Li

The No.1 Building of Guozhuang Beili in Yongwai District was the scene of a bloody murder last Friday night. A 19-year-old youth stabbed his mother and grandmother to death, and then called his father to return home. When the father entered the apartment, he too was stabbed, however he survived the attack.

According to Zhang Wenjing, doctor from the 999 Emergency Center, when she entered the two-bedroom apartment at 10:20, a middle-aged man was lying in a pool of blood in the hall. Her fellow workers who arrived five minutes earlier were trying to save him. "My workmates shouted at me 'hurry up, there are two more in the other room,'" says Zhang.

Zhang found the bedroom floor on the south side was covered in blood. Two women, one elderly, the other middle-aged, lay there dead. The older woman had two stab wounds in the stomach, the other had been stabbed at least seven times.

Zhang then found an 18-year-old youth sitting in the door of the kitchen, with a dull expression on his face, also covered with blood. "When I went to examine him, my workmate stopped me, and said he was the killer," she says. At that time, the father was telling the doctor brokenly that his son had called him to come home, and as soon as he set foot in the door, was struck by a knife. Neighbors called the police immediately on hearing the father's cries for help.

As the police took the young man away, he was heard to say in an expressionless voice, "I hate my mother!"

According to the Temple of Heaven Hospital, the father is now out of danger.



Takami Kunio talks about tree-planting in Shanxi.

Photo by Qu Liyan

## Greening Datong

By Chen Ying

A 54-year-old Japanese man has spent the past 11 years helping and encouraging farmers in Datong, Shanxi Province, to plant trees. Some ten million trees have been planted in the region, though many have not survived because of the harsh conditions. Takami Kunio gave a speech about his work at the Sino-Japan Friendship Environmental Protection Center this Tuesday.

As a member of Green Earth Network, a Japanese non-government organization, Takami and four colleagues visited Datong in 1991, intending to carry out a planting project in cooperation with the local youth federation.

But his colleagues soon quit, believing it was impossible to complete the plan in the Loess Plateau, an area that has suffered severe environmental degradation. "All the clever have left. I stayed here because I am fool," Takami told *Beijing Today*.

Many local people were suspicious of Takami's intentions in the first two years. However accompanied by officials from the local forestry administration, he visited the countryside and mountains, learning the different tree species and their Chinese names, gradually, these suspicions were dispelled by his action. He often visited farmers alone, eating with them and staying in their homes.

Takami was very depressed when he returned the year after he planted trees there first time. Few had survived, and many local farmers had chopped trees down, thinking they occupied land that they needed to make a living.

"I make a mistake of bureaucratism," Takami said, and he adjusted his environmental strategy accordingly. He helped farmers plant economic plants in more than fifty of the poorest villages, and locals began to understand that a balance could be struck between making a living and protecting the environment.

Even Takami, however, is not confident about how many trees could survive. That is why he has embarked on his current speaking tour. He hopes more people will focus their attention helping improve the environment of China's northwestern provinces.

The climate in central western area of Japan has deteriorated since the beginning of 1990s. Many Japanese experts say the sandstorms originating in the Loess Plateau are one of the main reasons. But Chinese audiences have their own opinions about the phenomenon.

Lu Tongjing is an amateur photographer from Inner Mongolia, who has snapped many photos reflecting the environmental destruction caused by human activity. He pointed out after Takami's speech that many Japanese wool factories operating in China's Northwest provinces have led to an increasing number of local people raising goats. These goats destroy the grassland, hastening environmental degradation.

"I hope I could meet some of you next spring in Datong," Takami told his audience, saying that it would now take just three and a half hours to drive from Beijing with the opening of the new highway between the two cities.

## Elderly Fraudster Confesses

By Su Wei/Huang Ran

Wang says it never occurred to her that Fan would cheat her, even her son advised her to take care. "My son questioned why Fan frequently borrowed such large sums of money, which he never paid back. But I thought since we would get married, I should not care too much."

Fan, whose full name has been withheld by the police, has since made a full confession. A retired furniture manufacturer, Fan got to know Wang Yuying, a retired researcher, through a match-making company in April 1999. "The company told me she is rich, owning a grape garden and with a monthly income of US\$1,000, provided by her daughter living in the United States."

In order to win Wang's favor, Fan told her he owned two furniture factories, omitting to mention that one is bankrupt and the other insolvent.

According to Wang, the two fell in love and started living together immediately after they met. One month later, Fan asked Wang to lend him 10,000 yuan. "I told her I needed the money for contracting a project in South China, and gave her an IOU," says Fan. "She gave me the money without any hesitation." Taking advantage of Wang's trust, he borrowed another 10,000 yuan, with the excuse that he was paying the medical fees of a friend. The following month, Fan borrowed over 50,000 yuan with a variety of excuses.

Two weeks ago, after learning that Wang had deposited US\$30,000 sent by her daughter into her bank account, he asked Wang to draw 200,000 yuan to guarantee a bank loan of 500,000 yuan. "I told her I needed the money to open a factory, but she hesitated to give me the money," he said. "When I proposed to draw the money myself, she refused though she gave me a copy of her ID card."

Three days later, Wang was informed that someone with a copy of her ID, claiming to be her husband, had tried to draw money from her account, but input the wrong password several times. "I was then told that US\$10,000 had already been drawn by the old man."

She asked her son to drive to Fan's home, around 10 kilometers away. She refused Fan's pleas for forgiveness and his offer to return 30,000 yuan first, and insisted he go with her to the police.

## Software Infringement Case Dropped

By Su Wei

A suit lodged against a local software company ended abruptly Monday when the plaintiff angrily withdrew his case and stormed out of the Chaoyang People's Court in mid-hearing.

Cai Jianyong, chief editor at China Science and Technology Publishing House, says since June this year he has received numerous complaints from clients about the frequent breakdown of their computer systems.

"After running a test program on their computer systems and comparing the operation of computers using different software systems, I found the breakdown is caused by the installation of Chinese keyword web-search software made by 3721."

Cai claims that the software development company "does not inform people that the software will occupy computer memory after being downloaded" and questions "why the software keeps on running whenever the computer runs."

He also claims that the program cannot be closed or uninstalled. "Since the software cannot be uninstalled, its running conflicts with the running of other software and causes the computer to become unstable," he says.

Cai also claimed that the software uses cookies to "illegally" monitor users, sending information back to 3721's server. "In theory it is possible. The problem is that we cannot provide any evidence that 3721 really does or does not do so." He says such monitoring is "illegal and infringes users' privacy, and threatens the safety of Internet."

In his suit, he demanded 3721 compensate the expenses he incurred, such as developing the test software and "spiritual loss," totaling 700,000 yuan, and called for 3721 to inform users that installing the software would occupy computer memory.

Shu Xun, public relations manager of 3721, disputes Cai's claims, "By common sense, people should know that software needs to occupy computer memory. We also provide six ways for the user to uninstall the software if they do not want to use it."

Although conceding that it was possible their software might conflict with other software being run by the user, depending on the configuration, there was no possibility of their company infringing on the privacy of users of the software. "The court rejected all of the 20-plus reason claims they listed," he pointed out.



Forget basketballs, footballs, softballs and medicine balls, students at Yangfangdian Central Primary School make their own balls, using old newspapers, rubber bands and plastic tape. They are not necessarily perfectly spherical, but they are cheap, and safe to play with, according to Zhou Chen, the school gym teacher. (By Lily Li)

# Newest Kids on the Block

What kind of men are SO6, boy band flavor-of-the-month?

By Lily Li

**C**heer or weep, it looks like boy bands are here to stay — for the time being, at least. The latest development in male teen pop took place November 23 at the 2002 Sohu National Contest, when the six final winners, all handsome university students, were formed into a new group, SO6.

The nationwide competition, launched by Sohu.com in September, culminated in an event that drew gaggles of young girls, who blocked the gate of the Century Theatre on the night of the final contest for a look at their soon-to-be objects of affection.

"Like regular talent scouts, we selected 12 outstanding finalists from more than 10,000 fashionable young men," said Charles Zhang, CEO of Sohu.com, with a smile.

Sohu.com went so far as to hire famous fashion companies to teach the boys and design their looks, while singing and dancing experts were also brought in for special lessons 10 days before the finals were held. Around 40 major celebrities were invited to attend the event to spur on the aspiring pop idols.

With SO6, which will star in advertisements and promotions for six Sohu mobile phone services in the future, Sohu hopes to create a boy band supergroup capable of surpassing F4, a group from Taiwan that exploded onto the scene in the Chinese mainland in the past year.

At the end of last year, when the TV series *Meteor Garden*, starring the members of F4 (short for Flower 4), shot off the ratings chart, the group became the hottest name in the country. Not only were the primped and preened boys signed to hordes of advertising deals, they also stole the hearts of millions of scream-in-

clined teenage girls.

However, fame is fleeting and the masses are fickle, and F4's star seems to already have faded, according to a report run in *Nanfang Daily* on November 24. After packing stadiums in shows earlier this year, only half the seats at a November 23 F4 concert in Guangzhou were sold.

Stories of such short success do not seem to daunt the new guard in boy bands. "We won't be shooting stars, but fixed stars that will always shine," said SO6 member Jia Nailiang.

Now that the faces of the new group have been chosen, the time has come out to start churning out the product. For that Sony Music will step in, composing some songs special for these boys, who have also started to receive offers for acting gigs from many movie companies.

Will this new batch of pretty boys with their cookie-cutter moves, look and tunes end up as successes or one-hit wonders? Why do people like boy bands in the first place, and what is their social impact or importance? Opinions follow:

**Wei Wenbiao, writer,  
China Youth Daily**

In the entertainment world, boys being viewed and admired is a kind of degeneration of human nature.

These pretty boys share some common characteristics — that is they are handsome and well made-up, and too slick to make anyone really comfortable; they are beautiful but not that manly; they care greatly about their appearance, by preening like turkeys or other kinds of birds instead of just going for cleanliness and neatness; and their words are too sweet and their voices too tender, just like girls'. The worst thing about them is that they like to pose for photos,



SO6: (Top, Left to right) Tang Liang, Gong Xiao, Jia Nailiang, Li Tie; (bottom) Zhou Chen, Wang Wenguang

Photo provided by Sohu.com

even racy photos.

It's awful that a man would be so coquettish in front of the camera lens, and even more, be willing to bare flesh in public. I think that people of the same sex are not drawn to each other, so we men won't be interested in these boy bands. For women, though, it's also not a sure thing — as my wife says, women won't be attracted to men they do not have feelings for.

So when I see these men I'm confused. Their figures on the tube might be attractive, but they can't be respected. Their shows can make people cry, but can't move their hearts. Compared with male figures that show an indomitable spirit, these guys can be viewed as 'girly men'.

**Wang Gang, designer,  
www.21dnn.com**

I think it's good for Sohu to bring together some handsome and smart boys to please the fans. But I'm opposed to the introduction of flower-like boys. A real man should be ready

to stand up to any difficulty and solve any problem to win success in the end. Male beauty is a strong kind of beauty.

But these handsome boys like F4 and SO6 don't have the strength to make other people feel energized. It's very hard to get anything useful from such guys. From this perspective, the appearance of the pretty boy bands, as well as the entertainment field heading towards an era of men, is not a good thing, it's a loss.

I'm one of those people who believes that everybody has his or her role in the world. If boys dress like girls, it will lead to a breakdown in our value system and the healthy growth of children.

**Xu Xulian, employee in Xiu Hua Life Insurance Co.**

What China needs now is a good entertainment atmosphere. The endless string of girl models and stars is getting boring and wearing everybody down. Handsome boy bands are a poor but effective substitute

for the bump and grind of the "Female Beauty Era".

This may have transformed the way we live, but it's exciting! When I see F4 on their Pepsi ads, I feel younger and full of energy and spunk.

What you think of boy bands is a personal question. In my mind, they're just going after the career they want. Personally, I think of them in much the same way as I think of bus drivers.

So, maybe SO6 is just working their own way and looking to get others' love, and that's OK. Everyone has their own taste, so there will definitely be someone waiting to love them.

**Zhou Hang, first-year girl student at Ba Yi junior middle school**

I love these guys! They are energetic and their shows are really wonderful. Although this time I didn't watch their performance, I am sure I will fall in love with them soon.

Several months ago, some friends of mine actually cried when they heard the members of F4 speak, or even smile or whatever. But now they have had a change of heart. One of those friends went to Shanghai last month to see an F4 concert, and when she came back, she said it was, like, "boring".

It must be hard work being an idol, especially a male idol. Girls have very high expectations of boys, so if they want to be stars, they have to be really, totally excellent, or something.

And I think it's totally fair for handsome boys to become stars. So many girls get famous just because of their beauty, why can't boys do the same?

Although my parents always tell me I'm crazy to love these male stars, I don't think so. I cherish every one of my crushes on a boy idol.

## SOUND BITES

"We must realize that if we are reluctant to invest in prevention now, we'll have to invest much, much more in the future on patients' treatment. We still have the chance to prevent a large-scale epidemic of HIV/AIDS at present. But it may be the last chance."

— Yuan Jianhua, leader of a research team at the Beijing Institute of Information and Control. The number of HIV-infected people in China could be held to around 2.2 million by 2010 if timely and comprehensive steps are taken to control the epidemic, according to a study conducted by the team

"We believe that our country has been unfairly maligned. We believe that we have been subjected to criticism that we do not deserve. We believe that people have been misinformed about Saudi Arabia and what Saudi Arabia has done, or frankly that people have lied about what we have done or what we allegedly have not done."

— Adel Al-Jubeir, Saudi official disputing allegations Saudi Arabia has done a poor job in keeping money out of terrorists' hands

"Most people think about race and gender discrimination — national origin discrimination doesn't come to mind, but it's having a greater impact on the workplace."

— David Grinberg, spokesman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the US. Complaints of discrimination based on national origin in the US have risen 20 percent over the last eight years, according to the EEOC

By Chen Ying

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By Su Wei

The parents of a 16-year-old middle student complain that their daughter refuses to do anything in public, such as delivering a speech in class and having a meal at a social gathering. "Each time her excuse is the same, she has a headache or a stomachache," says Song Jiawei, Xiao Yu's mother. "We cannot force her, she threatens she will die if we insist."

"I am afraid of meeting people, of doing anything in public," says Xiao Yu. "I want to get rid of such fear, but I cannot. I once asked my mother why I was like this. She made no explanation, but told me that I got lost once when she took me shopping when I was six years old. I screamed, cried and wet my pants..."

According to Tang Yilang of Beijing Anding Hospital, Xiao Yu suffers from social anxiety disorder, a fear of social situations and interaction with other people.

"Every day, we have new patients suffering from social anxiety disorder, most of whom are middle school students," says Tang. "In the 1980s, it was very rare to encounter any such patients, of any age."

Concerned with the increasing number of patients showing symptoms of social anxiety disorder, especially among middle school students, Tang conducted a one-year-research among 1,337 students aged between 13 and 19 at a middle school in Xicheng District.

The research reveals that fewer than 20 percent of the students surveyed have never displayed any symptoms associated with social anxiety disorder. Of those affected by it, nearly 11 percent say symptoms occur more than three times per week and slightly less than two percent maintain the condition prevents them from leading a normal life.

#### Family influence

Tang's research shows that children with strict parents are more likely to suffer from social anxiety disorder. "The more severely the parents criticize, the more likely the children are to feel they are belittled and rejected, and their dignity is hurt," says Tang. "Rigidly enforced discipline gives the children a sense of loneliness and being deserted, which inhibits their ability to interact socially." He highlights the fact that strict parents tend to downplay or ignore the importance of support and understanding as a key component of family care.

In his opinion, severe parental punishment causes children to be over-cautious, in an effort to avoid blame. He points out that, "Frequent criticism of children results in their feeling inferior and avoiding social activity through fear of making a fool of themselves." He says as a result of this lack of self-confidence, "children would unconsciously extend their wariness to everyone they encounter."

Tang says children whose parents do not excessively criticize, but tend to over-control and over-protect them, also suffer from low self-esteem. "They pay too much attention to their behavior in public in order to obtain the sense of being recognized. When they encounter problems in terms of social intercourse, they are more easily hurt, which further heightens their nervousness."

Li Fei, 14, has been receiving treat-



ment for almost a year for social anxiety disorder at a clinic in Haidian District. "My parents are very serious and I seldom see them smile. They are strict with me, especially my father. He set rigid regulations for me," says Li. "He is so frightening, especially when he loses his temper." She remembers her father once threw a pen at her, which struck her face, drawing blood. "The reason was that I failed in a class test."

She says she once protested in vain. "But the more I protested, the stricter they became. I then started to hate them and hate myself. I then gradually became frightened of meeting other people."

According to Tang, a strict father has more damaging impact on a child than a strict mother. "The father is regarded as a strong man, undertaking major responsibility in the family and society."

Family economic conditions are also a factor in students developing social anxiety disorder. According to the research, few of the surveyed students suffering from the disorder come from wealthy families. "They tend to be envied by their fellows and have more confidence. So they are less likely to be influenced and give up in front of difficulties," says Tang.

#### More than just shy

Tang says there is much still to be studied about the links between personality and childhood experience. He says it

'Rigidly enforced discipline gives the children a sense of loneliness and being deserted, which inhibits their ability to interact socially.'

— Tang Yilang of Beijing Anding Hospital

should not be assumed that less talkative children are simply well-behaved. "They may suffer from social anxiety disorder."

"I know I am not sociable," says Xiao Wei, a 15-year-old middle school student from Chaoyang District. "The older I get, the harder I find it to get on with others." He told *Beijing Today* that as a child, he suffered from flatulence and was teased mercilessly about it by his schoolmates. Nowadays, he says, although he no longer suffers from this embarrassing problem, he still has the sense that others regard him as nuisance. "It seems they always try to cover their noses or hold their breath and speed up to pass me. Since I am so disgusting, why should I bother to meet them?"

In Tang's opinion, children resort to avoiding suffering brought on by anxiety

District, says she has the feeling she is being raped whenever she meets a man. "My face becomes flushed; my body shakes, and I perspire uncontrollably until I close my eyes or the man leaves," she says, "I am afraid of seeing any men, including my father." She adds that she has never had sex with a man.

According to Doctor Xu Youxin, from Beijing No. 6 Hospital, Wang's fear is the result of an early childhood memory of her parents having sex. "Her reaction is based on her perceived reactions of her mother," he says.

"She treats sex as a dirty thing and by extension, regards interacting with members of the opposite sex as demeaning. Lacking sexual knowledge and understanding of relations between men and women, throws her into a state of deep confusion — the feeling of having a sexual demand placed on her, accompanied by sexual inhibition." In his opinion, Wang's sexual phobia is a result of juvenile inhibition, which could potentially prevent her from leading a normal life.

Xu says generally, such sexual phobias in female students have similar causes to that of Wang's. They causes tend to be more complex when compared with male students. Boys, especially those quiet ones, always mistakenly believe that girls are attracted by them. They are eager to express themselves to these girls, whom in fact they have good opinions. The more eager they are to talk with girls, the more afraid they are of rejection, which results in heightened nervousness.

He says it is social pressure that causes boys to suffer such phobias. "No one would consider it strange that a girl is shy upon meeting a boy. But if a boy behaves coyly in front of a girl, he would be laughed at and considered 'unmanly.'"

#### Seeking perfection

Tang and Xu agree that students suffering from social anxiety disorder tend to be vain and unwilling to acknowledge their shortcomings. "A false self-image is then established. In order to maintain this 'perfect self-image,' they need praise from others and cannot tolerate any criticism," says Tang, "On one level, they know such expectations are unrealistic, but they are unable to face the truth."

Xu says upon being made aware of their shortcomings, these children become nervous, ashamed and pessimistic. "Trying to escape the torture caused by these humiliations, they resort to further covering themselves up, through avoiding socializing with anyone else."

#### Not always a negative

Tang emphasizes that to some degree, social anxiety is a necessary step in everyone's personal development.

"It is even an important step in the way people learn to behave properly in a variety of social situations and improve their ability to express themselves." He says he personally considers that it is good for children to go through such a stage.

"But for the three percent of the surveyed students whose normal life and study are adversely affected by social anxiety disorder, the phobia is not constructive. The sooner they undergo medical treatment, the earlier they will recover," says Tang.

(Pseudonyms have been used for all the interviewed students and parents.)

Photo provided by Tony Stone

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Yi Xingquan has his first management lesson under the tutelage of Zeng Guoping.

Photo provided by Chongqing Prison

# Doing Time — in the Classroom

By Zhao Xiaoqiu / Ivy Zhang

Last month, a prisoner in Chongqing who is serving a life sentence started a course in management provided by Chongqing University.

The tutor comes to the prison to give the lessons and the tuition fee of 7,500 yuan that ordinary students are charged has been waived.

The story has caused outrage in some sections of the media. It was asked whether convicts should be afforded access to university-level education. Isn't it a waste of social resources?

*Beijing Youth Daily* sent a reporter to the prison last week to find out more.

## Hard labour?

Yi Xingquan, 39, a college graduate, used to be the General Manager and Chief Engineer of Chongqing Suote Construction Corporation, one of the Top 50 enterprises in Chongqing.

On September 16, 2001, Yi was sentenced to life imprisonment for embezzlement. Local people nicknamed him the "No.1 embezzler" in Wanzhou district, Chongqing.

He was sent to Chongqing Prison on this July.

Yi told the reporter of his misery after being sent to jail. His 18-year-old son can't forgive him and though his wife visits him, none of his relatives or friends will.

He says he wants to study in order to focus his mind on something constructive instead of his disaster. He believes what he learns can be put to use when he is released from prison in the future.

This August, Yi read a student recruitment advertisement posted by the Trade and Administration School of Chongqing University. A one-year-long workshop for advanced economic and management personnel was to be launched.

Yi intended to apply. He consulted with prison supervisors and received their backing.

On September 16, he wrote an application letter to the school. About two months later, Zeng Guoping, the president of the Trade and Administration School, handed an acceptance letter to Yi in person.

Asked why he had his tuition fees waived, Yi said his personal property has all been confiscated or frozen and he was unable to pay the fees totaling about 9,000 yuan.

Yi said that when he finished the one-year management course, he hoped to continue his studies as a graduate student of Chongqing University.

## It's an outrage!

On December 1, a Beijing news website named *beijingnews.com.cn* posted an article titled *Questioning the Happy Prison Life of the No. 1*

Embezzler in Wanzhou, which annoyed both the prison and school.

"Yi Xingquan, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment, has applied to study an MBA at the Trade and Administrative School of Chongqing University," the report said.

"The University waived most of the tuition fees and charged him a mere 1,500 yuan for his books. In addition, the university arranged for a professor to teach Yi in the prison. Yi, the prison and the school, claim their purpose is to let him create wealth for society."

"Isn't such prison life happy? But does a convict have the right to study an MBA course virtually for free, with tutors coming to the door to help? After graduation, who can guarantee Yi will 'create wealth for society'? If punishment is intended to make people so 'happy', people will soon be swarming into prisons," the report commented.

It quotes China's Criminal Law to elaborate that the penalty is a means adopted to punish criminals by force. Prison is not a school, the report says, nor is it a place to educate people.

"Humane care should not go too far," it concluded. "Otherwise, the time may soon come when convicts go to university instead of prison."

Some others share this opinion.

Lu Jianxin, a student at the Biological Engineering School of Chongqing University, said higher education teaching staff are comparatively scarce in China.

At present, the limited teaching resources should be applied in the education of people who don't have to serve a lengthy sentence before creating wealth for society, he said.

Yi told *Beijing Youth Daily* that some of his fellow inmates laughed at his behavior. Some said he wanted to "kiss the ass" of the guards or get special treatment; it would be better to buy food with the 1,500 yuan rather than studying, they told him.

## Prison fights back

The prison was understandably dismayed by the report. In their eyes, a positive initiative had been turned into a controversy.

"I don't think it is a waste of resources," Wu Yingcai, deputy warden of Chongqing Prison told *Beijing Today*.

"Our principle in the reform of criminals through labor is to combine the penalty with the reform of their character. The penalty is meant to deprive a person's freedom, not their right to learn," Wu said.

He said criminals are citizens as well and are entitled to study. "To foster a criminal is as important as to foster a college student. It is even more important to transform a criminal into a good person."

There are three ways to reform a criminal, according to Wu. They are penalty, education and labor.

For Yi, it does not mean he has special rights to read books all day long. Like any other prisoner, Yi spends eight hours every day working, processing machinery parts, and having two-hours of legal instruction twice a week.

The only difference between Yi and other prisoners is that he is the first one in the prison to study a higher education course.

According to Wu, among the thousands of inmates, 60% are illiterate or primary school graduates, 37% are junior or high school graduates and 3% are college graduates.

After Yi's story circulated at the prison, more than 30 inmates followed his example and applied to study the same course. "Next time when the professor comes around, it will not be a one-person class but a 30-person class," Wu said. The reason the professor had to come to the prison was "out of security concerns".

As to the 'repaying the debt to society' issue, Wu said the purpose of supporting Yi's study is to help in reforming his character.

"Whether or not he can repay society depends on how long he stays in jail and his health," Wu said. Though having had just one class, "he is already in a better state of mind than when he arrived."

According to Chinese law, criminals are required to serve no less than one half of their sentence in prison no matter how well behaved they are. For those who are sentenced for life imprisonment, the minimum period is 10 years.

## School's social responsibility

Educators are also social workers who have certain social responsibilities, Zeng Guoping, the President of Trade and Administration School, Chongqing University, said.

Zeng clarified that what Yi studies now is not an MBA degree course. It is a workshop targeted at senior management personnel with flexible learning approaches and systems.

"I teach management courses," Zeng said. "In a prison with thousands of criminals with severe sentences, learning can divert their thoughts and energy, which is not only beneficial to the transformation of convicts and stability of the prison order but also helpful to their families."

While Yi has one class per month in prison, ordinary students go to the campus once a week. Upon graduation, normal students will be granted a training certificate.

But for Yi's desire to be a formal graduate student of Chongqing University, Zeng said no regulations or policies currently exist in China to address Yi's scenario.

# Waking Up to AIDS

By Ivy Zhang

A week on from World AIDS Day on December 1 and it seems the media's attention has already moved on.

China has found it hard to acknowledge the disease but many volunteers and organizations, government and non-government, are still working to raise people's awareness of it.

In China, discrimination and fear are still serious obstacles in the campaign to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

## Xiao Li and Mangrove

Xiao Li, 26, is perhaps the first HIV positive volunteer in China.

He contracted HIV from a blood transfusion in 1994. Xiao Li joined the UNAIDS project team in 2000 and founded the Mangrove Support Group at the beginning of this year.

The group seeks to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS.

"It is my first project and my career," Xiao Li said during an online talk program held by sohu.com on November 29.

"Mangrove is a project designed to support HIV positive people. Anyone can participate. As long as no cure is available for HIV/AIDS, Mangrove will keep working."

Xiao Li is one of the first individuals to have become personally involved in fighting discrimination and ignorance surrounding HIV/AIDS.

"When people contract the disease, they try to hide it because if they are 'exposed' they know they will be discriminated against. Why do we never talk about this discrimination? If we don't, there is no way we can talk about prevention," Xiao Li said.

He said HIV/AIDS sufferers are members of society too, and should have the right to serve society as well as to be served. They also deserve the right to employment and to learn.

"The mental insult to people with the disease is a heavy blow to them," Xiao Li said. "Due to people's misunderstanding, HIV/AIDS sufferers are likely to lose their current life, including their family, career, relatives and friends. That is what people who contract the disease are most afraid of."

But one of his experiences did make Xiao Li feel warm at heart. His family gave him great support but he didn't want to tell his friends about his disease.

However, some of his friends learned about it when they happened to read Xiao Li's test report. They told him about it two months later.

"They said 'we want to let you know we will treat you the same way as before,'" Xiao Li said. "During the nine years since I contracted HIV, I feel this moved me the most. I really cherish my friendship with them."

## Another volunteer

*Beijing Today* interviewed Li Dan, 24, who has also signed up to fight the AIDS scourge.

He does not have the disease but has volunteered to help HIV/AIDS sufferers.

He is a student of astronomy but he does not intend to work in this field after he graduates next year. Instead, he wants to set up an HIV/AIDS non-government organization.

His first encounter with an HIV-positive person was in December 1998.

Song Pengfei, 17 at that time, was the first person to contract HIV whose identity was exposed by the media in China.

He contracted HIV during a blood transfusion in an operation. When news of his condition got out, he was thrown out of his school and then his family was driven out of their village in Shanxi Province.

On a snowy night, Li Dan and another volunteer, Lan Jie who later became his girlfriend, visited Song at a rented house in Fengtai district in the south of Beijing. They stayed there for about two hours.

"He was in low spirits at that time and seemed lonely. I had no fear. I just felt he needed help. It was hard for him to live without any friends," Li Dan said. From then on, Li Dan often visited Song and they became friends.

Li Dan had been working as the Public Relations Director of the Red Cross Association at Beijing Normal University at

that time. "I hoped I could persuade someone who had contracted HIV to become a spokesman about the disease in China. People always associate AIDS with drug addicts or prostitutes. If someone stepped out, it would be of great help to change public views and affect the government."

Unfortunately, Li Dan's proposal was turned down. But that did not stop him from continuing his work as a volunteer.

## What about the children?

In August last year, Li Dan went to Henan Province for a week with Song.

AIDS spread rapidly in many villages in Henan in the 1990s after unlicensed blood plasma centers were opened. Rules and hygiene were virtually ignored as the centers tried to collect large volumes of blood, causing the spread of AIDS among the paid donors, most of them poor farmers in the province.

Li Dan and Song visited three counties and 14 villages.

In a village in Weishi County in the southeast of Zhengzhou, they met an old man. The old man's only son who was in his twenties had died of AIDS three days earlier.

"There was nothing at his home but medicine bottles scattered all over the ground," Li Dan said. "Nobody told him AIDS was incurable. Local leaders asked him to burn down the house his son used to live in. Nobody dared to walk by in front of his home."

No villagers would make a coffin for the son or help dig a grave for him. The old man had to carry his son on his back alone to their watermelon field, digging a hole to lay his son in.

Li Dan says that in many of these villages with about 1,000 people, about 40% to 50% have contracted HIV/AIDS.

Villagers who have the disease know well they are going to die. What they are worried about is the prospects for their children.

In Jun County, Shangqiu, more than 10 local people surrounded the two young men.

"One said to me, 'my husband passed away. My three sons and three daughters-in-law have all contracted AIDS. The whole family is facing death except the children. What will happen to our children?'"

Li Dan says he spends half his time doing work related with HIV/AIDS and he visits Henan or Anhui once a month.

After a trip to the villages, he writes reports and gets them posted on the web as well as giving them to the Ministry of Health.

## Blood donor

When he visits Henan, Li Dan has no fear of contracting HIV/AIDS. Rather he fears hepatitis.

"When you dine with a person who has HIV/AIDS, usually they're not concerned about whether they have any other diseases so often the bowls are not clean and the hygiene isn't that great."

"So if you want to show you do not discriminate or you are not afraid of them, you have to eat from the same plate," Li Dan said.

## You can not

explain that you

are afraid of

catching a cold

or hepatitis."

Li Dan says he spends half his time doing work related with HIV/AIDS and he visits Henan or Anhui once a month.

Asked what he would do if he should contract the disease, Li Dan said, "I would be a spokesman on behalf of other people living with AIDS. Maybe I could help more people."

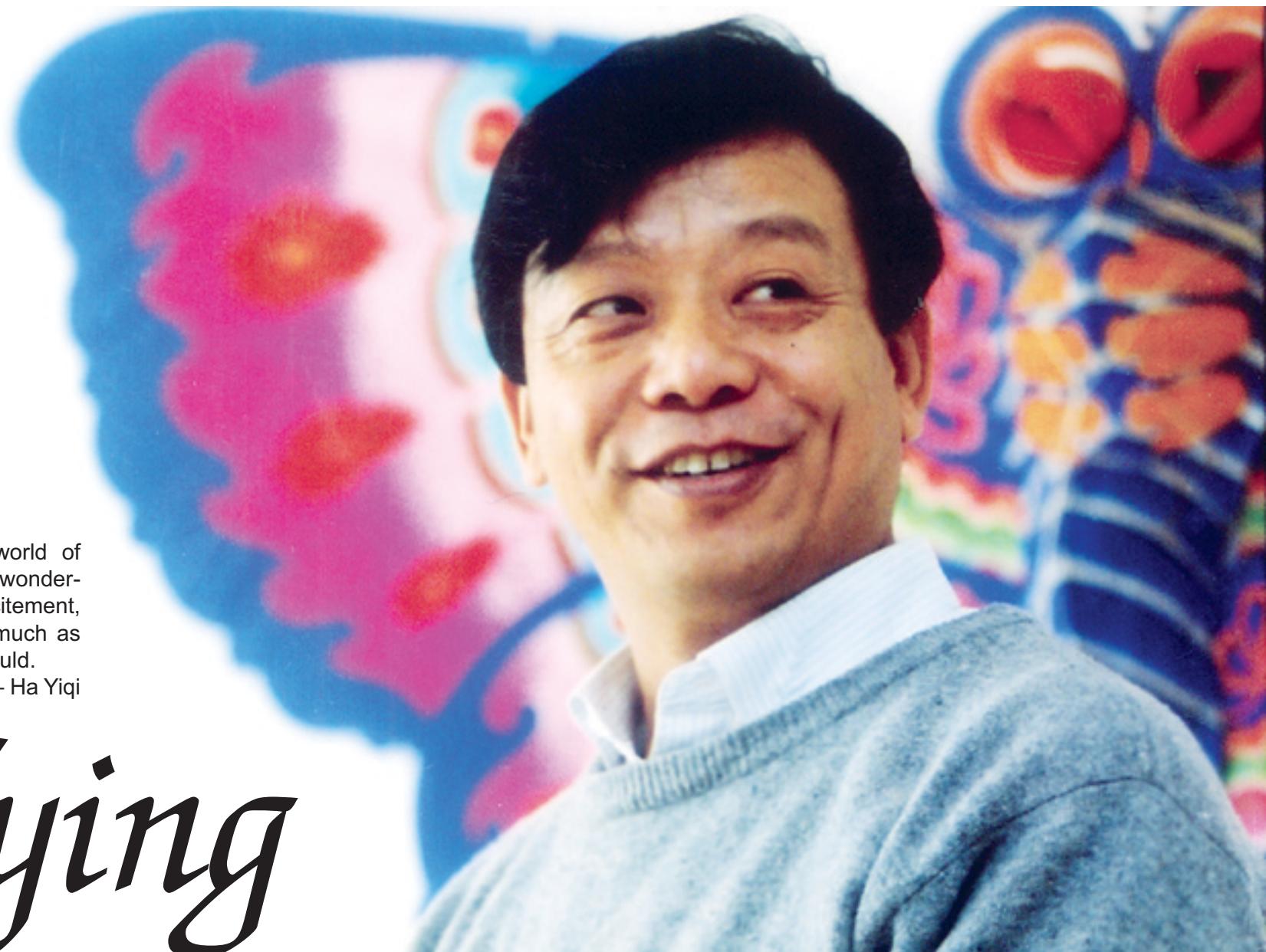
## Still blind to AIDS

In Li Dan's eyes, the status of people living with HIV/AIDS has not changed much from three years ago.

He said he once talked with a cab driver about HIV/AIDS and the AIDS villages and the driver knew nothing about it.

"The Chinese media covers HIV/AIDS stories in a sensational way as though it's something extraordinary. They are all shallow reports."

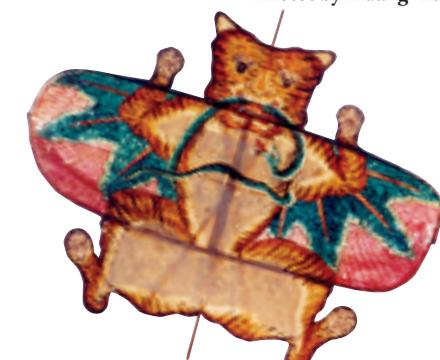
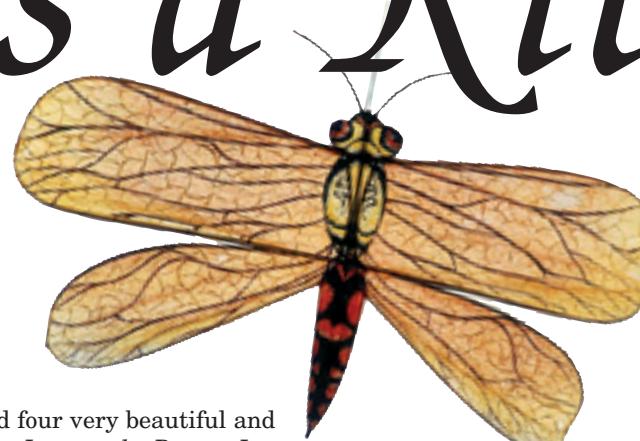
"Coverage of AIDS should not be restricted to World AIDS Day. HIV/AIDS should be recognized as a serious problem in this country," Li Dan said.



I entered the world of kites. It's weird, it's wonderful, it creates excitement, and I enjoy it as much as my father said I would.

— Ha Yiqi

# Flying High as a Kite



Photos by Huang Liang

By Lily Li

**H**a Yiqi is preparing for his show at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel. A small group of young men is gathered around his desk. Their eyes are fixed on what he is preparing and expressions of wonder are on their faces.

"It's a Dragon and Tiger Fighting kite," says the maestro. "I made the frame with a special kind of bamboo and put the paper in it at home," Ha explains.

Ha is not bothered by the attention of the people watching him. He's become used to adoring audiences for his kites which have been exhibited all over the world. The art of making kites is something with an international following, but to Ha Yiqi, it's just a continuation of the family business, and in his case, the unique Ha-style kite technique.

#### Kite family origins

"My great-grandfather, Ha Guoliang, began making kites during the reign of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty." Ha shows me a photo of his great-grandfather's first kite — a butterfly.

Ha Guoliang moved to Beijing as a brickie, before setting up a snack shop named Qin Hang in Liu Li Chang street. The business was bad, so in order to make some money before Spring Festival one year, he began to sell kites.

Kites have a long history of about 2000 years in China. In the Qing Dynasty, flying kites was a very popular tradition in Spring Festival. A Qing dynasty poem named Beijing Bamboo Branch refers to it: "Watched from the bridge of the imperial river, thousands of kites are flying in the dusk."

People used to fly the kites and then cut the thread as they believed the kites could take away any illness and troubles of the New Year and bring the blessings of heaven. Senior people believe the higher their kites fly, the longer they will live.

"My great-grandfather sold kites just to make a living. But because of his outstanding technique, Ha-style kites became famous in Beijing."

#### Prosperity

The best time for the Ha family kites was during the time of Ha Changying, Ha Yiqi's grandfather. In ancient China, business always passed from father to son. Ha Changying had not only studied his father's butterfly style but had also created new kite frames and pictures based on drawings in the Summer Palace and Temple of Heaven. His kites were so acclaimed that they were used as tributes to the emperor.

"Two years ago, I went to America to give a lecture about kites on the invitation of USA Kite Association," Ha says.



Hanging a Dragon kite in his home gallery

Ha colors the Two Immortals kite at home.

"At their show, I found four very beautiful and unusual kites, called Two Immortals, Bronze Incense Burner, Heavenly Judge and Catfish. There was a bit of paper with them saying '1903 - Made by Chinese Kite Master Ha Changying' said Ha Yiqi with tears of pride in his eyes.

In 1998, Ha Yiqi attended the International Kite Show Contest held in the US and he got the highest award, Special Grade Award. "I couldn't help thinking of my grandfather when I got the award, especially when all the Chinese contestants and workers applauded," says Ha Yiqi. "From poverty and humiliation in China, Ha-style Kites have become honored in international society."

#### Up in smoke

The family's kite business started to go downhill after the 1950s. Not a single kite was sold in 1958. In these tough days, the head of the Ha family was Ha Yiqi's father, Ha Kuiming.

The worst time for Ha-style kites came in 1966, when the cultural revolution started. "The slogan in that period was clearing up old things, definitely including our family's kites because they were once sent to the emperor."

In order to protect his family, Ha Kuiming decided to burn all the kites and drafts. "All the kites, small or big, were put into a large pot behind our house. It kept burning for three days."

"We couldn't help crying when all the kites we'd had around us were turning to ashes. For about a

week, my father hid himself in a room, not talking to anyone."

Even now, Ha Yiqi still falls into a mood of sadness when telling the story. "Black smoke of the burnt kites circled beyond our house. Some neighbors came to see what happened and many of them had tears in their eyes too. They had no questions and we had no explanations. During those three days we had no words, we just felt our hearts were hollowed out."

For almost ten years, the family didn't refer to the word "kite". "But my father sometimes drew in the ground, I know he missed his kites." Ha Yiqi said his first kite was also lost in the ashes.

The cultural revolution ended in 1976, and a new spring came for Ha-style kites. Ha Kuiming began to recall all the old drafts and tried to redraw them. And with the help of his son, Ha Yiqi, his book *Chinese Artistic Kites* was published in May, 1986 with Chinese and English versions. This book covers the history of Chinese and Ha-style kites and tells how to make a good kite.

#### New prosperity

Ha Yiqi, the third son of Ha Kuiming, now shoulders the task of restoring the family kite business. It helps that he is a kite fan. "My obsession with kites began 35 years ago when, as a 13-year-old boy, I was so proud of flying my own kites with friends." Ha's father noticed his drawing aptitude and encouraged him from an early age to take oil painting lessons and make kites. But by his early teens, his bedroom walls were plastered from floor to ceiling with pictures of Li Ling Yu, a beautiful singer.

"Obviously I didn't grow up in a closed environment and I was in touch with many modern things everyday. But my father told me about the family history, and I found the kites were the closest thing to my dream, the reality and pure truth that existed in people's lives."

When his father died in 1993, Ha Yiqi felt making kites was no longer just a dream or a hobby but a responsibility, a family responsibility.

He had earlier decided not to go to college and



Flying the smallest kite — Lantern Butterfly

went to an arts factory instead. His decision was based on his work and his love of kites. "I entered the world of kites. It's weird, it's wonderful, it creates excitement, and I enjoy it as much as my father said I would."

Every apprentice of his says Ha has an intense but reserved manner and Ha agrees. "I try to make everything perfect and be aware of what's going on," he says, "and sometimes people who don't like what I do are quick to point out how silly I am by giving examples of people who've become far richer than me. But I still spend a lot of time collecting and studying kites because I don't want to do what other people have done, I want to be unique."

Ha Yiqi drew a great deal of kite designs while caring for his sick father. "I created a lot of new kite pictures at that time. But my father told me I should study our family-honored techniques well first," says Ha. "In his last days, my father told me that inheriting, not creating, is king."

From 1995 to 1996, Ha Yiqi collected most of the lost Ha-style kite designs by re-tracing kites that his family had sold. He gave up the position of a factory director in Beijing Arts Factory. "I had a very good time in that factory where I learned the knowledge of not only traditional arts but also accounting and managing."

Ha Yiqi now has 80 apprentices. "But kite-making is so difficult for youngsters nowadays, it's time-consuming and low paid. Only people who are really interested in it and have that kind of ability can master the technique."

Ha Yiqi can hear the word "48", his age, without flinching. But pictures which used to take Ha a day to finish now need at least three days. "Last month, when I had nearly finished a tiger picture, my hand shook suddenly and made a small drop of ink on it. I tore it up at once painfully because I knew it wasn't perfect and my week of painstaking efforts were gone."

Ha Yiqi now plans to open his kite shops in big cities around China and even overseas. "Kites were used only as a tool of celebration before. Now they are more popular as entertainment or a kind of exercise for old people and young people now enjoy making their own kites very much," says Ha Yiqi.

"Technically, this is super-ambitious, I'm mixing the old and the new and connecting a link between the past and the present."



Antiques, genuine and reproductions, are for sale all over the village.

By Zhu Lin

The front room of the home is a folk furniture store, and the living room contains several pieces of furniture, all used by the family, but also for sale. In Lüjiaying, a village on the southeastern outskirts of Beijing that serves as a folk furniture distribution center, this is nothing unusual, it is how most families conduct their business.

**A little bit of everything**

There are more than 100 stores in the village, selling folk furniture and utensils, most of which are bought from local people in Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Shanxi provinces.

The stores selling different types of goods are concentrated in different streets.

H and Y Antique Furniture Shop sells goods from Shanxi Province. It is one of the biggest shops in Lüjiaying, with goods filling three rooms and a courtyard. The biggest item on sale is a replica of prison cart used in ancient China, with an asking price of 4,000 yuan. "This was ordered by a Korean who wants it for his movie company," says Zhang Yuan, a shop assistant. In the courtyard is an old carriage waiting to be repaired.

At the slightly more modestly proportioned South China Classic Wood Carving Store,



Zhou Liming sits on a chair carved from a tree stump, while his daughter reads at a heavy wooden table with curved legs, carrying a price tag of 800 yuan. A hat and a shirt hang on the cover of a meter-high old jar used for keeping water. "We also have kerosene lamps imported from Germany in the Qing Dynasty," says Zhou, pointing toward five lamps, "100 yuan each."

Outside a house belonging to Zhang Gaiping, there are hundreds of stone blocks with either carved dragons or lions, waiting to be sold. Zhang says she had a three-meter high archway used in an official's house in Qing Dynasty. She brought it here early this year from her hometown in Shanxi, and a friend bought it.

"You can find every kind of utensil here," says Zhang Yuan, "And you can never predict what will appeal to the buyers."

**Something old, something new**

There are three types of goods



collected in Lüjiaying: originals, replicas, and new designs made for special orders. These family-run businesses sell their goods in Beijing, while other family members scour their hometowns for more saleable items. "There are lots of old houses being pulled down in my hometown, and the owners don't know what to do with the old utensils," says

# Folk Furniture Village

Photos by Feng Yi

carved windows and doors comments, "In the Furniture City in downtown Beijing, they charge 6,000 yuan."

**Business is changing**

One and half years ago, Ye Feihu left his job in his hometown in Jiangxi Province. He came to Lüjiaying with sixty thousand yuan in pocket, and opened the South China Palace Antique Wood Carving Store. He pays 1,100 yuan rent per month, and can earn 6,000 yuan per month. "But I want to quit," he says, "Less and less people come to buy my goods. I guess because Beijingers' interest in folk furniture is declining."

The market for antiques and folk furniture in Beijing started to develop from the mid 1980s. With the belief that there were ready profits to be made in the business of selling folk furniture, newcomers rented houses from locals and set up businesses in South China. They processed the goods and distributed them to antique markets like Panjiayuan Market. At the same time, they sold their goods directly to visitors.

But since this year, many such businesses have encountered difficulties. "The business is like any other, it has its ups and downs," says Zhang Yuan, "And besides, good folk pieces are increasingly difficult to find."

## Ming Carvings Unearthed in Beijing

By Wang Chunzhu

Four granite slabs with relief carvings lie under the sun in the yard of the Beijing Cultural Relics Research Institute. The stone slabs are the remains of a Ming Dynasty tomb, and were rescued from a construction site in Beijing's western suburbs in mid November.

"The Ming Dynasty tomb was discovered during the construction of the foundation of a tower block," says Zhu Zhigang, a vice director at the Beijing Cultural Relics Research Institute, "but the tomb had already been partly destroyed when we arrived there."

According to Zhu, the tombs were unearthed, and subsequently destroyed, in the 1950s, when a factory was built on the site. It was at that time that the remains buried in the tomb and the funerary objects disappeared.

"We thought that something might be left there," Zhang says, "but when it turned out to be a set of stone carvings, we were overjoyed."

Each of the four stone slabs are around 2.5 meters long, 1.5 meters wide, 15 centimeters thick. They give a detailed insight into the life of the tomb's owner: Servants hold a basin of water; two trees and a bonsai stand in the courtyard of the house; and a row of three *jishou*, or divine animal guardians perch on the corner ridges of the roof. "It's the first time that we've found such vivid tomb carvings of this size in Beijing!" Zhang added.

The presence of the *jishou* is testament to the importance of the tomb's owner. Use of these spirit guardians was strictly confined to buildings connected in some way to the imperial family during the Ming and Qing dynasties, such as palaces, temples, and the mansions of senior government officials. Hence it seems likely that the owner of the tomb might have been an official who directly served the emperor.

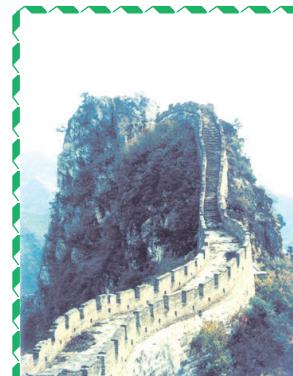
If more of the tomb had remained intact, we might have been able to tell who was buried there," Zhang says, "but in the absence of the body and funerary objects, our options are limited."



Photo provided by Beijing Cultural Relics Research Institute

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## Notre Dame de Beijing

By Yu Shanshan

The staging of the French version of the hit musical *Notre Dame* at the Great Hall of the People, represents another first for Beijing. However the production raises again questions about China's ability to produce and stage world-class musicals.

**Fertile ground**

Considering the commercial success of productions such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Les Miserables* and concerts of Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals performed here in the past four years, it is clear that there is a market for such entertainment in China.

The first domestic musical, *Games in the Valley* was staged in 1989. In the next ten years, students from the Central Institute of Drama produced adaptations of *West Side Story* and Webber's *Cats*.

In 1998 and 1999, there was a string of home-grown musicals — *Story of Hero Si Mao*, *Future Partner*, *White Lotus*, *Legend of the White Snake*, and *Yu Niao Soldier Station*. But all of them fell off the cultural radar virtually as soon as their runs had finished. According to the critics, none could qualify as a role model for future productions.

At a recent seminar on Chinese musicals, which addressed such issues as how to make musicals more relevant and appealing to an increasingly sophisticated audience, music critic Chen Li made the point that "great Chinese literature has a strong artistic potential for adaptation to our classic musical."

However composer Wang Zujie argued that China "lacks experienced musical producers, actors and actresses versed in acting, singing and dancing, and suitable industry infrastructure system."

**Musical breakthroughs**

One generation's breakthrough often becomes the next generation's stereotype. Hence the buzz that has greeted Gavyn Robinson and Stephen Robertson's *Notre Dame* and the way it breaks with the conventions of modern musicals.

"The acting has sunk under more than 40 beautiful French songs," commented San Bao, composer of *Legend of White Snake*.

Other breaks with tradition, which have divided critics in Europe and America, include the use of pre-recorded, rather than live music, and headsets rather than fixed microphones. Meanwhile a strict division of labor sees singers doing little else but sing, while the more physically demanding aspects of the production are left to professional dancers and acrobats.

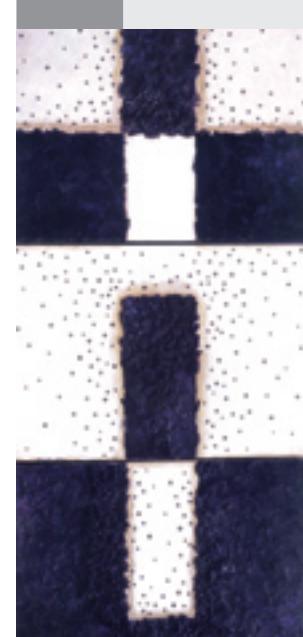
Five performances of *Notre Dame de Paris* will be staged at Beijing's Great Hall of the People from December 20.

# Over Canvas and Brush

By Yu Shanshan

"What they want to say is not so important, it's how they say it," Tan Genxiong told *Beijing Today*.

Tan is the instigator of the "Ground Zero" Material Art Exhibition, held recently at the Art Museum of the Chinese Central Academy of Fine Arts. He is also one of the 18 artists from around the world whose work featured in the show.



Complementarity Zhou Changjiang

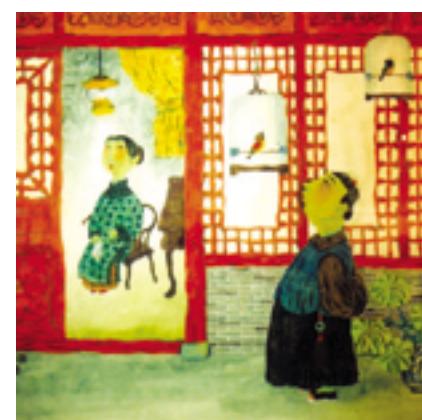
"Sorry, but what is it...made from?" a visitor giggled self-consciously when a guard told him not to touch the artwork. His response to the exhibits was typical of most visitors to the exhibition. Clay, metal, silk, wood, newspaper and some bits and pieces that looked as though they had been salvaged from a rubbish bin — anything the artists considered appropriate was utilized in these pieces.

"This time we place emphasis on the material itself," said Tan. "That's a return to the origin of painting."

The 150 works shown in the exhibition are all recent works, but not necessarily representative of a new phenomenon in China. "Most of these artists have been studying material for dozens of years," Zhu Jin, an artist from the Oil Painting Studio of the Fujian Arts Museum, told *Beijing Today*.

These artists are forging a new direction for Chinese art, and differentiate this show from many others that they take as imitating and catering to western tastes. Not "experimental" or "avant-garde," but "post-modern." "Post-modern as far as I am concerned means diversified choosing," said Tan.

Happy Times Zhu Jin



Dialogue Gao Wengang

## Women on Canvas

By Qiao Luqiang

Although there is a strong supporting cast of male figures, the spotlight is on women in a group exhibition currently underway at Wan Fung Gallery.

The artists are from Shandong, Hebei, and from Beijing. Their differing cultural backgrounds are apparent in their depiction of female figures.

The artists featured in the exhibition, most of whom will be familiar names to regular Wan Fung visitors,

are Gao Wengang, Hu Yongkai, Li Guangping, Zhang Wei, Zhang Zhenhua, and Guan Yuliang

Gao Wengang, born in Benxin, Liaoning Province, graduated from the Chinese Painting Department of Lu Xun Fine Arts Academy. His painting *Dialogue* shows a middle class couple of the late Qing Dynasty in their courtyard home. Outside in the yard, the man is occupied with a bird in a birdcage. His exquisitely dressed wife sits demurely inside, watching her husband.

In stark contrast to this reflection on the past is a work by Hu Yong-

kai, simply titled No. 07. Hu was also born in the north but he travels frequently overseas and his work is strongly influenced by western art in terms of color and expression. In this painting, a woman in a tight, brightly colored skirt is being warmly embraced by a man. The passionate kiss, the gestures of the hands and arms and the body language are an evocative reflection on the liberty of personality.

**Where:** Wan Fung Art Gallery, Nanchizi Street, Dongcheng, Beijing

**When:** till December 25

**Tel:** 6523 3320

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Gabriel Gullen is playing guitar.

# A Night of Latin Passion

By Wang Chunzhu

Gabriel Gullen, the renowned Venezuelan classical guitar player, delighted his new Chinese fans with an exquisite performance last Saturday night at Jinfan Concert Hall.

Gullen started learning the guitar at the age of eight in his motherland Venezuela, and after winning a scholarship to study in Europe, he moved to Vienna, Austria. Hence his music has both Latin and European flavors.

During the one hour performance, Gullen played world famous pieces as well as music from Venezuela, which included *Preludio Criollo*, a short piece by Venezuelan composer Rodrigo Riera, and *San Gabriel — For Gabriel*, a piece written especially for Gullen by another Venezuelan composer, Carlos Atilan.

"European music has a tradition of being more technical and analytical, but Latin music is about power and passion," Gullen said at a news conference. "I like to combine the two."

Gullen played in Chengdu, Guangzhou and Shenzhen before completing his debut tour of China in Beijing. The Beijing premiere of the international master ended with rousing applause from the audience for the last piece, *Largo and Rondo*, played by Gullen and Wang Zhen, the guest musician of the night, who is the art supervisor of Beijing Guitar Trio.

## Korean Love Story Attracts Beijing Audiences

By Wang Chunzhu

*Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps the most famous western romantic drama, and the love story between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu, two characters in *Dream of the Red Mansion*, represents a traditional Chinese love story. In Korea, there is *The Story of Chun Xiang*.

Last Friday and Saturday night at Poly Theatre, Beijing audiences had the opportunity to see a musical interpretation of *The Story Of Chun Xiang*.

Li Menglong, a man of high social standing, falls in love with Chun Xiang, a beautiful but common girl. The two encounter many obstacles to their love and are forced to separate from each other. However, the ending of *The Story Of Chun Xiang*, in contrast to *Romeo and Juliet* or *Dream of the Red Mansion*, brings the young couple happily together.

*The Story Of Chun Xiang* is a staple of the drama circuit in both North and South Korea, and its Beijing performance was a joint effort by Beseto Theatre from South Korea and Chinese artists. Heroine Chun Xiang was played by renowned South Korean singer Li Zhen'ai, and Li Menglong was performed by Professor Jin Yongzhe from the Central Conservatory of Music, a Chinese tenor of Korean descent.

Although the whole performance was in Korean, this did not seem to trouble the audience. The lengthy applause after the performance showed the local appreciation of this Korean classic.



A Scene from The Story of Chun Xiang

## Chinese Movie Wins Iranian Film Award

By Jenny Wang

At the 17th Iranian International Children's Film Festival, Chinese countryside comedy *A Father With His Twenty-five Children* was selected as the Best Feature Film and got the Golden Butterfly Award. It is the first time that a Chinese film has won the title.

It's a pity no Chinese representatives could attend the film festival, as the Golden Butterfly Cup had to be brought to China by air-mail. Officials from the Iranian Embassy made up for the ceremonial shortfall by delivering the Cup to director Huang Hong and his workshop last Thursday.

*A Father With His Twenty-five Children*, directed by top Chinese comedian Huang Hong, tells a story set in the Chinese countryside.

## Tibetan Soul Reaches Out

By Wang Chunzhu

With her albums *Sunshine from the Snow-covered Land* and *Awaken*, pop singer Han Hong has brought a series of Tibetan folk songs to mainstream audiences. Her latest album, *Singing*, sees a more diverse style while still containing two more songs full of Tibetan flavor: *Langla Folk Song* and *The South Silk Road*.

Having grown up in Tibet, Han Hong does not consider the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau as alien and mysterious as some artists do. "It's my home," she told the reporters, "and whenever I think of it, the things that come to my mind are



Lining up the children

Zhao Guang (played by Huang Hong), is an orphan brought up by all the people in the village. He becomes rich by establishing a chicken farm and he volunteers to take care of all the orphans in the area. A series of funny stories occur between him and his twenty-five children.

Films from various countries were selected for the renowned Children's Film Festival. *War Games* from Britain and *Three Goats* from Finland were jointly awarded the Best Short Film.

the yak butter tea, highland barley wine, and my lovely home." Perhaps this explains why Han Hong is unwilling to leave the musical influence of her home behind.

Still, there are new elements in *Singing*. *Come on* sees Han explore a bit of rock and roll; *Blue* and *Such Kind of Woman* present a more sentimental side. One of the album's highlights is *The Moon*, a Yunan folk song.

"Singing means not only the movement of one's vocal chords", Han Hong said. "It should echo the innermost feelings." She told the reporters that her favorite song on the new album was *Where Is It?* "I hope people will be able to find a pure and peaceful place in their hearts with my music", she said.

## WORLDWIDE



Peter Garrett, the bald, imposing lead singer of Midnight Oil

### Lead Singer Quits Rock Band Midnight Oil

Peter Garrett, the energetic lead singer of Australian rock band *Midnight Oil*, has quit the band after 25 years.

"The last 25 years have been incredibly fulfilling for me, and I leave with the greatest respect for the whole of *Midnight Oil*," Garrett said in a statement posted on the band's Web site. "The band has brought a lot of pleasure and meaning to people's lives, including my own. Who could ask for more?"

But Garrett, a committed and eloquent environmental activist, said it was "time for me to move on and immerse myself in those things which are of deep concern to me and which I have been unable to fully apply myself to up to now." (AP)

### Rolling Stones to Play Near Jagger's Home

The Rolling Stones will go to the home of English rugby for their first British date in four years, organizers said Monday.



Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones dances across the stage.

The band will be echoing what they have done on their North American tour — staging one stadium, one arena and one small show. In London they will play Twickenham on August 23, the Astoria on August 27 and Wembley Arena on August 29. (Reuters)

### Sony Pictures Says Box Office Hits Record

Led by blockbuster *Spider-Man*, Sony Pictures Entertainment on Monday said the global box office for its 2002 film slate hit a record \$2.75 billion, topping 20th Century Fox's 1998

season when *Titanic* was steaming strong.

*Spider-Man*, released in May this year, has not come anywhere near the *Titanic* figure. The movie has pulled in \$815 million in global ticket sales, so Sony relied on a mix of strong movies to reach its total.

Other Sony hits this year included action movies *Men in Black II* with \$439 million and *XXX* with \$242 million in global ticket sales. (Reuters)

### No Child for Niles Expected on Frasier

David Hyde Pierce can't go to the supermarket without people congratulating him on his television marriage to Daphne.



David Hyde-Pierce

Pierce, who plays Dr. Frasier Crane's brother Niles on *Frasier*, says people usually say: "I'm so glad you're married, she's so nice, are you going to have kids?"

Pierce says since it took the characters nine years to get together, it isn't likely they'll have a baby anytime soon. The show, which airs on Tuesdays on NBC, recently entered its tenth season. (AP)

### Paramount's Lansing Tops Hollywood Power Women's List

Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart has been cut from it, Madonna slipped a few notches on it, and Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen have moved up a tad.

The "it" is the Hollywood Reporter's annual list of the 100 most influential women in show business, unveiled in Tuesday's edition of the show business trade magazine.

Sherry Lansing, who became the first female chairman of Paramount Pictures in 1992, regained the top slot on the list, after slipping from No. 1 to No. 2 last year. (Reuters)



Sherry Lansing regains the top slot.

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# Spot for Spoiled Pooches



(left): Before ...  
(above): ...and after the royal treatment

By Huang Lisha

**M**aybe it was just a matter of time. Following the proliferation of beauty salons around the city and the rising popularity of pets, a whole new concept in grooming has sprung up in the capital - the dog salon.

The Yuppy Puppy Parlor, an upscale salon exclusively for canine guests, promises to keep your mutt looking like a champion pure bred.

Yuppy Puppy Parlor's general services, aqua serge bath, towel dry and warm air fluff drying, brushing and/or combing, ear cleaning, nail clipping, scissor finish, and custom styling, cover all the basics and range in price from 200 yuan to 650 yuan. Additional services, such as dematting, the shed-less program and deep remoisturizing, are also available.

This pet beauty salon's manager and chief stylist is Rebecca Xu, a Certified Master Groomer with the International Professional Groomers Association and the National Dog Groomers Association of America, who has ten years experience in the field. Additionally, all the equipment used, as well as the Coat Handler System line of shampoos and conditioners are the top products in the world, imported from the US. Overall, Yuppy Puppy promises true five-star service for your four-legged friend.

Charges are pretty high, but as Rebecca says, "You get what you pay for."

Please note: all pets must be in good general health, in possession of a registration permit and up to date on their Bordetella, DHLPP + C and Rabies vaccinations. Appointments should be made ahead for all services.

**Where:** 28, Sanlitun Beilu, Chaoyang District **Open:** Tuesday-Sunday, 9:30 am - 8 pm (Closed Mondays) **Tel:** 6507 3388, 13501 062738

## Light 'Em if You Got' Em

By salinda

For those who enjoy the finer things in life, the west side of town just got a little more inviting. Cigar aficionados have a new place to go, the Acanta cigar store that opened last month in the Shangri-la Hotel.



Acanta stocks many different types and brands of cigars, including Davidoff, Ashton, Avoacco and Prometheus, which range in price from 100 yuan to 500 yuan per cigar. To enhance the experience, the store also offers a full range of top-of-the-line accessories, such as cutters, lighters, ashtrays and humidors.

Most of the cigars for sale are Ashton brand, which come in four blends: Classic, Aged Maduro, Cabinet Selection and Virgin Sun Grown (VSG). The four types represent a full spectrum of flavor, enough to match any palate.

The well-informed sales staff is happy to explain the nuances of different stogies to customers, as well as which kinds of beverages make the best complements to cigars.

The store is too small to offer a smoking lounge, but it does have a special humidor for storing customers' precious cigars.

**Where:** First floor of Shangri-La hotel, 29 Zizhuyuanlu, Haidian District **Open:** 10 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 8842 0112

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Strawberry stool, 28 yuan

## Wonderful Wood

By Liang Hongling  
Of the small stores that make up the Old Beijing Street

In Xindong'an Plaza, one stand out is Ri Xin Gu Se, a cute shop that specializes in wood carvings and traditional pottery.

Most of the intricate carved wood pieces are made of camphor wood because it is especially suitable for carving and repels damaging worms.

Over 50 wood pieces hang on the store's wall. All exhibit exquisite workmanship, and most are related to traditional Chinese culture, such as a set that represents the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac, and pieces portraying the Eight Immortals from Taoist mythology. Other objects with symbolic meaning, such as representations of *kylin*, a kind of unicorn in Chinese myths, and white cranes, signs of longevity, are good gifts.

Also for sale is a wide variety of pottery goods, ranging from vases, candlesticks and ashtrays to ocarinas, egg-shaped, high-pitched ancient musical instruments. Scattered around the floor are different stools shaped and painted like bananas, watermelons, apples, oranges, pears and other fruits in vivid colors.

**Where:** First underground level of Xindong'an Plaza **Open:** 9 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 13701 390709



Handcrafted wood carvings range from 580 to 980 yuan



Banana stool, 28 yuan  
Photos by Li Shuzhuan

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Photos by Peng Jianwei

# Beating the Winter Blues Is a Piece of Cake



Xinqiao Sapporo Bakery

Affiliated to the Xinqiao Hotel, established in 1954, the Xinqiao Sapporo Bakery was the first western style bakery to introduce cakes and breads to the city in January 1986. While most of the first customers were wary of actually eating the goods for sale, that changed quickly and queues snaking out the door became a common sight in the morning.

Since then, the Sino-Japanese venture has established a solid reputation, even though the prices of its cakes are higher than many competitors. The bakery's signature confection is its cream cake. "We never add water to the cream for our cakes. If you pay 100 yuan for a cake, you want 100 percent quality," says manager Zhang Zengyu.

Another special is cream cake made with some lard, which sets a higher standard for fresh and hygiene. "Ours is the only bakery in Beijing that can make this kind of cake," claims Zhang, though *Beijing Today* found similar cakes in the Moscow Restaurant Bakery.

A 30-centimeter wide cream cake weighing in at 2.3 kilograms goes for 138 yuan, while a one kilogram chocolate cake costs 95 yuan. Breads range from 1.5 yuan to 5 yuan each.

**Add:** No.2 Dongjiaominxiang, Dongcheng District **Open:** 7am - 9pm **Tel:** 6512 8918

**Moscow Restaurant Bakery**

At first, this bakery was part of Moscow Restaurant, the very first Western restaurant to open in the city in the past 50 years. Later, the bakery branched off and went independent, but kept its name.

The bakery churns out Russian-style baked goods, highlighted by its chocolate cake and *lieba*, a Russian bread. An 850-gram, authentic chocolate cake sells for 85 yuan, while the 1.3 kilogram version goes for 118 yuan. The luxurious, 30-centimeter wide double-layered chocolate cake costs 180 yuan.

The bakery's designs are rather simple, but make up for their lack of flash with sheer quantity. *Lieba* goes for 14 yuan per kilogram, while other breads range in price from 1.5 yuan to 8 yuan depending on type and ingredients. All breads are marked down 20

By Wenlong

**T**hough Jack Frost has yet to bring his white touch to the city, people can still sense his approach with the steam-covered windows and sweet smell of neighborhood bakeries. With Christmas and New Year coming up, a carefully designed cake is a sure recipe for holiday fun in any family.

Though brought over from the West, cakes have become popular throughout China. Beijing's first bakery, Xinqiao Sapporo, opened in 1986 at the east gate of the Xinqiao Hotel and remains the business model for many other cake and bread stores. As bakeries proliferate, competition is rising and stores are constantly pressing for new creations to

draw business.

One cake store, Yinzuwu, has gone so far as to allow customers to design their own confections through computers and to apply and arrange the frosting on their cakes by themselves. That novel service propelled the store to success in 2001, in which it opened three branches, but the bakery's initial glory has faded. Now it only operates two small businesses near Chaoyangmen Bridge and the East Third Ring Road.

All the capital's bakeries share one feature: they open early to provide bread, buns and toast as breakfast for hungry customers. *Beijing Today* scoured the city and came up with the following list of reliable, high-quality bakeries.

percent every evening after 5:30pm.

**Add:** No.135 Xizhimenwai Dajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 9am - 9pm **Tel:** 68316677-2387



Weiduomei Bakery

Unlike the Western-inspired bakeries above, Weiduomei, set up in 1995, is a 100-percent locally born and bred shop that has been named one of the ten best bakeries in the country.

One unusual offering is cakes that have real photographs on top. Customers simply provide photos, and the bakery's staff then scans them and prints them again on edible paper made of soybean and glutinous rice and printed with edible ink. These cakes are a great fun for kids' parties.



1 Chocolate mousse from Sophie's

2 Part of cake selection from Xinqiao Sapporo Bakery

3 Cream cake with edible photo from Weiduomei Bakery

Weiduomei has opened 14 branches all over the city, including one at Hangtian Bridge near the West Third Ring Road, which, with an area of over 700 square meters, is believed to be the largest bakery in China. A basic 20-centimeter diameter cream cake goes for 56 yuan, and adding an edible photo ranges in price from 30 yuan to 80 yuan depending on size. A wide range of other breads and buns cost 1 yuan to 8 yuan each.

**Add:** No.44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian District **Open:** 6:30am-10pm **Tel:** 6257 0966

**Add:** No.84 Xisanhuan Beilu, Haidian District **Open:** 6:30am-10pm **Tel:** 6842 9885

**Sophie's**

Sophie's bakery is a Singaporean company established in 1994. The company has hired an experienced Australian baker to supervise overall bread and cake production. Besides fresh cream cakes, the bakery's specialty is ice-cream cake, a rich treat

5



6



7



8



4 Fruit cake from Renrenle Bakery

5 6 7 8 Cream cakes and liebas from Moscow Restaurant Bakery

Photos by Wenlong

Other cakes come with more simple designs and less complicated decorations. A 22-centimeter wide fruit cake goes for 48 yuan, a 26-centimeter wide cake for 88 yuan and a 32-centimeter cake for 128 yuan. Fruits cooked in and topping the cakes can include pineapple, mango, Chinese gooseberry and strawberry, as chosen by customers.

One downside to the stores is their staff is generally poorly trained and inconsiderate, often outright ignoring inquiries about prices or ingredients.

**Add:** No.89 Dongsi Nandajie, Dongcheng District **Open:** 7am - 8pm **Tel:** 6521 2693

**Renrenle Bakery**

Renrenle, which means "make everybody happy" is a chain of small bakeries scattered mostly around the east side of the city, including two branches on Dongsi Street. The stores specialize in fresh fruit cakes that stand out among the bakery crowd with their unique layer of crystal-like jelly on top.

Stewed taro with pork Hakka-style

**Food Cure****Sleep Inducers**

By Wenlong

Milk and apples are widely recognized as helpful to people who have difficulties getting to sleep. The following foods are also useful in bringing an end to restless nights.

**Lily Seed Porridge**

Prepare 30 grams of fresh or dried lily seeds and 100 grams of rice. Soak the lily seeds in water for several hours, which helps to take away their bitter taste. Cook the seeds and rice into porridge and add sugar to taste. Eat the porridge in the morning and evening.

**Mutton, Yam and Milk**

Prepare 500 grams of mutton, 100 grams of yam, 25 grams of ginger and 250 grams of milk. Braise the mutton with ginger in enough water to cover both over a low flame for three to four hours, adding water to keep the meat covered. Add diced yam, boil until yam is done, then add the milk and remove from heat.

**Sticky Rice and Wheat**

Cook 50 grams of sticky rice and the same amount of wheat into porridge. Eat the porridge in the morning and evening.



Spicy and sour shrimp soup

**Hotpot Gets Thai Treatment**

By Wenlong

This city loves hotpot in the winter, but even the biggest addict of the spicy brew may yearn for something new, something different. Thai people have their own hotpot tradition and style, and Very Siam is one of the few restaurants in Beijing to offer the regional special.

One hotpot-like option is the spicy and sour shrimp soup, (27 yuan for a small and 58 yuan for a large), which is made of chicken chunks on the bone, ginger, lime leaves and juice, a wide variety of Thai spices, and, of course, fresh shrimp. The dish is supposed to strengthen the body and improve resistance to colds. Another Thai-style hotpot, curry hotpot, is made from coconut milk, curry, chicken meat, and mushrooms. A large pot, good for two people, goes for 138 yuan, and the small, single-serving version for 78 yuan. A good side dish to cut the heat is fried rice with pineapple, priced at 38 yuan.

**Add:** No.10A Xinyuanxili Dongjie, Chaoyang District **Open:** 11:30am-11:30pm **Tel:** 8451 0031 **Average cost:** 90 yuan per person



Stewed taro with pork Hakka-style

**Guangxi Connection**

The Zhuangxiangfu Restaurant offers an authentic taste of Guangxi, Guilin in particular, complete with a waitstaff in Zhuang minority style clothes and a kind of unusual tea native to the remote southern area. The tea is made of fried peanuts, salt, coriander, and popped rice, served in a cup with boiling water. This strange brew has a slightly bitter flavor that can prove an acquired taste.

Guangxi cuisine emphasizes a mixture of sweet, sour and spicy, mainly in dishes based on fish, chicken, vegetables and mushrooms. One stand-out example is stewed taro with pork Hakka-style, (*kejia niangsanbao*, 28 yuan). Even the Sichuan standard shredded pork with hot garlic sauce (*yuxiangrousi*) has been adapted by the kitchen to the Guangxi palate, by adding shredded green pepper, celery, black fungus, bamboo shoots and bean sprouts. Sweet, salty and a little spicy, this variant can hold its own against its brothers in even the finest of Sichuan restaurants.

**Add:** No. 18 Beisanhuan Zhonglu, Xicheng District **Open:** 10am-9:30pm **Tel:** 8208 6600 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

## A Very Special Christmas Party

This party, featuring champagne, dinner, dancing and a silent auction, will be held to benefit the Special Olympics, a global sports organization that provides sports training and athletic competitions for children and adults with special needs.

**Where:** The China Club, Asia Hotel, Chaoyang **When:** December 7, 6 pm **Admission:** 800 yuan **Email:** trish@specialolympics.org **Tel:** 8518 8500 ext 5591



## Lighten the Christmas Blessing

This is the season to be jolly! Celebrate the holiday season with a sumptuous feast, cocktail party, fashion show and surprise lucky prizes.

**When:** December 6, 6:30-8:30 pm **Where:** third floor, Tianlun Plaza **Admission:** 888 yuan **Tel:** 6513 8888 ext 8007

## Sports



Work on your forehand

### Tennis

Winter tennis will be available from December 6 with Bulgarian coach Andrei Andreev (formerly based in the Sino-Swiss Hotel). The cost for a 10-week course is 850 yuan per child (maximum 6 children).

**Where:** Sports Beijing, second floor of the Lido Country Club **When:** Friday, 5:30 pm-7 pm **Tel:** 6430 1412 **Fax:** 6430 1413

### Overnight hike

This summer, rainfall was heavy in the Yunmengshan Mountains. Rushing waters caused mudslides that took out the roads that ran on the side of the main mountain gorge. The government has decided to leave the road as is and let it return to nature, while most of the villagers in the valley are moving out. This makes it an interesting area to explore and offers possibilities for long walks without major climbs.

What to bring: Wash bag, change of clothes, water-proof shoes, sun block, hat, two bottles of water.

**Food:** We will prepare a ploughman's lunch and drinks and trail mix for Saturday, and fruit for Sunday. Saturday dinner will be served in the hotel. For Sunday breakfast we will bring bread, jam, chocolate spread, honey and fruits. Our host will make omelets and corn porridge. Lunch will probably be back at the hotel.

**Where:** Miyun County, northeast of Beijing **When:** December 7-8, meet at 8:30 am outside the Starbucks at the Lido Hotel **Admission:** 500 yuan **Tel:** 13701 003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

## Movies



Xu Fan (right)

### Spicy Love Soup

Directed by Zhang Yang, starring Xiao Bin, Xu Fan, Pu Cunxi. This is a humorous, intimate portrait of five couples in modern-day Beijing and how they cope with love. In Chinese with Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** CherryLane Movies, 21 Liangmaiqiao Lu **When:** December 6-7, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398 **Email:** michael@cherrylanemovies.com.cn

### Lamerica

Directed by Gianni Amelio. In this award-winning film, Gino (Enrico Lo Verso) is an ambitious young entrepreneur who goes to the impoverished countryside of Albania from his native Italy with dreams of getting rich quick, only to find his life changed forever as he becomes

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stripped of his material possessions and is forced to bond with the country's poor and oppressed peoples, and with one man in particular, a 70-year-old derelict named Spiro (Di Mazzarelli). In Italian with English subtitles

**Where:** Italian Embassy-Cultural Office, 2 Sanlitun Dong'er Jie **When:** December 19, 7 pm **Email:** italcult@public.bta.net.cn

### I Was Born, But...

Directed by Yasujiro Ozu. The film tells the story of a couple of brothers trying to fit in at their new home and with new neighbors. At the same time, they change their attitudes towards their father. In Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** Space for Imagination **When:** December 7, 7 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan **Tel:** 6297 1280

## Activities

### Mandarin Corner

A carefree and dynamic environment for ex-pats. Groups will be divided according to different topics (maximum three persons per group). Topics will range from life, culture, film and sports to job-hunting and interviews. Xia Luchen (Lucia), who has five years experience teaching Chinese language, will be the host.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpet, 29 Liangmaiqiao Lu, opposite Century Theatre, east of Lufthansa Centre **When:** December 10, 7:30-9:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan (includes tea and snacks) **Email:** beijing@chinesecultureclub.org **Tel:** 8851 4913



Chinese vegetables

### From Market to Table

Lorraine Clissold, host of CCTV's Chinese Cooking show, will give a short introduction to Chinese cuisine and help explain what is in the market and how to use these ingredients. A trip to a big open vegetable market will be organized afterwards.

**Where:** Lee's Antique Carpet **When:** December 7, 2:30-4:00 pm **Admission:** adults 40 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913



Lobby Lounge of the Kerry Centre Hotel

### Champagne Night

Celebrate life, please your friends or simply treat yourself with champagne. Champagne night starts at 8 pm and lasts until around 10 pm. Participants must dress up in "tenue de ville".

**Where:** Lobby Lounge of the Kerry Centre Hotel **When:** December 11 **Admission:** 150 yuan **Tel:** 6561 8833

### Mah-jong Party

A Mah-jong party will be held in mid-January 2003. In order to warm people up for the matches, a training course will be given.

**Where:** Beijing Language and Culture Center, 7 Sanlitun Beixiaojie **When:** December 13, 1:30-3:30 pm, 6:30-8:30 pm **Tel:** 6532 3005

## Language exchange

A group of Chinese college girls, all English majors, seek native English speakers for language exchange. Both individual and group exchanges are welcomed. Please email us at Taizhoubab@hotmail.com

## Stage



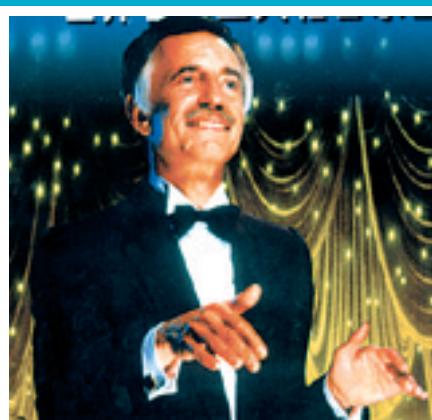
Opera: Tiannu Sanhua

### Peking opera

Programs include *wenxi* (excerpts mainly with singing and performing) like *Duan Qiao* (The Broken Bridge), *Tiannu Sanhua* (The Goddess of Heaven Scatters Flowers), as well as *wuxi* (excerpts full of acrobatic fighting) such as *Sanchakou* (The Crossroads).

**Where:** Zhengyici Theatre **When:** Daily, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 508

## Music



Paul Mauriat

French composer and conductor Paul Mauriat is a classically trained musician who decided to pursue a career in popular music. His first major success came in 1962, as a co-writer of the European hit, "Chariot." In 1963, the song was given English lyrics, renamed "I Will Follow Him," and became a number one American hit for Little Peggy March. Mauriat is best remembered for his 1968 worldwide smash, "Love Is Blue."

**Where:** The Great Hall of the People **When:** December 7, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 120, 180, 280, 380, 480, 680, 1000 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673, 6528 7674

### Guqin Concert

Mai Yueqiang, the eleventh master of the Guangling School, will give his first concert in Beijing. Mai's style tempers toughness with gentleness.

**Where:** National Library Concert Hall **When:** December 8, 4:30 pm **Admission:** Adults 200, 150, 120, 90, 50, 30 yuan **Tel:** 6842 2047

### 2002 Guo Feng solo piano concert

Guo Feng, a creative singer and composer, and a legendary figure in China's popular music circle, will give a performance.

**Where:** Beijing Exhibition Theatre **When:** December 13-14, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80, 180, 280, 380, 580, 680, 880 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 508

## Performance



Talk about balance

### Acrobatics Performance

A show that displays China's heritage, along with miraculous, skilled and beautiful feats.

**Where:** Wansheng Theatre **When:** December 6-12, 3:10-8:40 pm

**Admission:** 120 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 198 **Website:** www.piao.com.cn/english

## Auction

### Hanhai Auctions

Hanhai is presenting 1,800 artifacts with a total estimated price of over 80 million yuan. Among these, the porcelain, jade and miscellaneous artworks section alone has over 500 lots. One of the most important and valuable lots is a blue and white Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) jar with interlacing sprays of peonies.

**Where:** Jingguang Center **When:** December 6-7 **Tel:** 6597 8268



Calligraphy: Ode to Yanshan

### Ode to Yanshan

The most eye-catching lot in China Sungari's auction is a calligraphy work titled *Ode to Yanshan*, by one of the Four Masters of the Song Dynasty. This exceptional and precious work will only be available for purchase by domestic museums appointed by the State Cultural Bureau.

**Where:** Capital Hotel **When:** December 6-7 **Tel:** 6415 6669

## Exhibitions



A Pyramid by Yue Minjun

### Contemporary Artist Print Art Exhibition

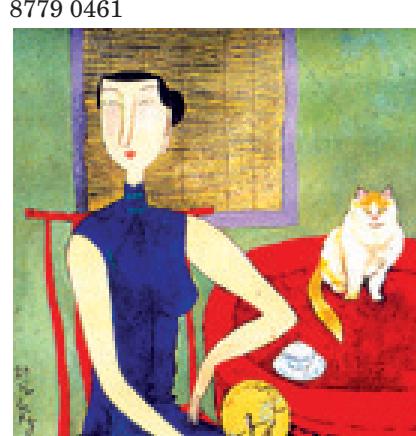
A&Y Studio, a pioneer in the screenprints field over the last 3 years, has been striving to promote the creation of outstanding vibrant contemporary screenprints. On behalf of A&Y Studio, Today Gallery will show a series of distinctively editioned screenprints from twenty leading young artists in China, including Yue Minjun, Yang Feiyun, Xie Dongming and Zeng Fanzhi.

**Where:** Today Gallery, 9 Wenhui Beilu, Haidian **When:** December 7-January 7, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6221 7711

### Winter Art Exhibition

Works by Xiao Se, Ling Zijiang, Tian Yu, Liu Yan and famed seven-year-old artist Yangchun Beixue. Precocious talent Yangchun began painting at the age of one, and her paintings of singing and dancing people and birds already sell for top dollar.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, Huawei Enjoy Paradise 1-1E (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang **When:** till December 22 **Email:** qingallery@yahoo.com **Tel:** 8779 0461



Happy and Contented by Hu Yongkai

### Colorful China

To counter the gray and colorless winter, this exhibition features very colorful works. Artist Zhao Chengxiang's color and ink paintings, with roots in folk art, are filled with color but still have a tranquil feel and unspoken elegance. Yang Ermin creates a relaxed and poetic world.

**Where:** Creation Gallery, North end of Ritan Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** December 8-20, 10 am-7 pm. **Tel:** 8561 7570

## Parties

### Mid-month Bash

The party features RCA garage-rockers Damone from the US playing with Thin Man and Wild Strawberries.

**Where:** Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** December 6, 9 pm

**Admission:** adults 60, 50 yuan, students 40, 30 yuan **Tel:** 8457 3506

### Special End of Year Party

Wudance was specifically formed by DJs Yang Bing and The Wigglemeister to bring quality Tech House and Funky Techno to the dancing feet of Beijing, in a small, intimate environment with great sound where people can enjoy a close vibe and groove to the music. This is your chance to enjoy funky dance music in a friendly environment. DJs: Yang Bing from Beijing, The Wigglemeister from UK and Maef Ju from Berlin.

**Where:** Lava Lounge, in the lane opposite Workers' Stadium north gate **When:** December 6, 11 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan

### Weekend Party

Reflector and Overload will take the stage.

**Where:** Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** December 6-7, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

### Ragga Relax Vibe

Guest DJ's join S.press and O.P. for a night of grooves by vibe with a reggae flava. Specials: screwdriver 15 yuan

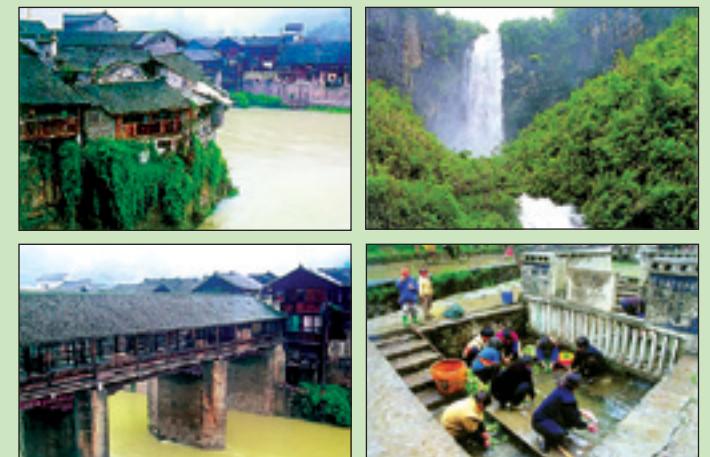
**Where:** Vics, inside Workers' Stadium north gate, Chaoyang **When:** December 12, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6593



# A View on Ancient China

The stele corridor (fore) and the courtyard of Golden Phoenix Platform (back).  
Photos by Chai Qingchun

Chinawide



**By Jerry Ho / Chai Qingchun**

In Linzhang County (临漳县), Hebei Province, there once stood a city which was the pride of the local kingdom nearly 2000 years ago. Today there's a small village with an express highway roaring past it. A clue to its past lies in the one remaining example of the city's most celebrated local architecture - three raised platforms named Golden Phoenix (金凤台), Bronze Bird (铜雀台) and Ice Well (冰井台), built both for a military perspective on surrounding lands and for royal functions and entertainment. The Bronze Bird Platform was famous throughout China, but now only the Golden Phoenix platform remains.

#### The City

Ye City (邺城) was the capital of six dynasties in Chinese history. The city was first constructed during the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476BC) and was destroyed in the Sui Dynasty (581 - 618 AD). Students of Chinese history will have come across the name from the story of Ximen Bao (西门豹) and Hebo (河伯 Ghost of the River).

During the Warring States Period (403 - 221BC), the city used to be part of the Wei State. When Ximen Bao was made governor of the county, local people had been suffering great losses from heavy flooding of the Zhang River. Corrupt local officials claimed to have



Steps to Golden Phoenix Platform viewed from the stele corridor.



Stone statues stand along a path on Golden Phoenix Platform.

consulted a witch who said the floods were caused by the ghost of the river and said the only way to appease it was to offer it beautiful local women as brides as well as bountiful gifts. Tormented by both natural and manmade disasters, local people grew poorer and poorer and many of them started leaving the area. Ximen Bao dealt with the vicious officials by having the witch and her apprentices drowned. The officials were so terrified they pleaded for mercy and promised to behave themselves. The governor then started construction to contain the floods. After that, the local people enjoyed good harvests and a peaceful life.

Cao Cao (曹操), a famous warlord of the Three Kingdoms era, conquered the city in 204AD and made it the second capital

of his kingdom. He started to develop the city on a large scale and made it a template for future city construction. A main road traversed the city from east to west, splitting it into two halves - the civilians' area was in the south and the palace area in the north. Another longitudinal road ran down the middle of the city. Influence of this construction pattern reached as far as Japan. Political conditions were stable during the reign of Cao Cao. He built the three platforms and created a new style of literature, known as "Jian'an".

#### The Platforms

1,700 years have passed since Cao Cao began his construction of the city. Though historical information indicates that the three platforms used to serve as military outposts, most people considered them a place for entertainment. The Cao family used to have feasts and recite poems at the Bronze Bird Platform.

The remaining Golden Phoenix Platform includes Wen Chang Pavilion (文昌阁), a stele corridor and an exhibition of archeological findings of the old city. There is also a detailed introduction to Jian'an literature and its most famous exponents.

Jian'an used to be the title of Emperor Liu Xie's reign in the late Han Dynasty, lasting 25 years from 196 - 220. The Jian'an tradition has a prominent position in the history of Chinese literature and later generations

have always held it in high regard. The genre produced a lot of excellent poets, including Cao Cao and his two sons as well as a group of poets known as the Seven Masters. The style involved poems of four or eight lines with five words per line. Jian'an poetry revealed the liberated mindset of the times. Writers and poets were brave in expressing their thoughts and ideas, and actively participated in the reform and evolution of society.

#### Tips:

1. The site of the Three Platforms is in Santai village (三台村), Linzhang County, Hebei Province, about 40kms away from the important industrial city of Handan (邯郸). It is 10kms away from the Ci Xian/Linzhang (磁县/临漳) exit of the Jingshen (Beijing to Shenzhen) express highway (京深高速公路).

2. No public transportation is available to the village. It is advised to take a taxi from Ci Xian to reach the village. Though the site is in Linzhang County, it is much nearer to the center of Ci Xian (less than 20kms).

3. The area is rich in historic relics, including

Ximen Bao Temple (西门豹祠), the mausoleum of King Lan Ling (蓝陵王高庸墓) and a group of tombs from the North Dynasty. The Xiang Tang Hill (响堂山石窟) grottoes in Han Dan, and ruins of the Yin Dynasty (14th to 11th century BC) in Anyang (安阳殷墟) are all quite famous and not far away.

## Ancient Beauty of Wuling

#### By Wenlong

Wuling (武陵) is located at the border of Hunan and Hubei provinces, near Chongqing City. It is famous for its charming scenery and simple way of life. It's also a cheap place to visit.

From Jishou (吉首), 160 kilometers from Zhangjiajie in Hubei Province, tourists can take a bus along the Tuojiang River (沱江) into the Wuling Mountains.

#### Longtan Ancient Town

Longtan (龙潭) is an ancient town in the Wuling area. Rows of black houses are typical Han nationality structures and most of them are built as siheyuan or compounds with houses around a courtyard.

But the niches in the attics of the houses, some in the form of shrines, are of unique Tujia nationality style.

The clear water of the Longtan River winds around the town, before joining Yuanjiang River (沅江) and then running into Dongting Lake (洞庭湖).

Because of the ease of its water transport, the town enjoyed a period of prosperity in the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), especially during the reign of the Qing Emperor Yongzheng.

At that time, many people came to live in the town from surrounding provinces, particularly from Jiangxi Province, bringing with them new and innovative ideas about doing business. The town went on to become a collection and distribution center for a variety of goods.

Now the whole Longtan area covers 258 square kilometers and has a population of more than 50,000, about 10,000 of whom live in the ancient town.

The local government authority has taken steps to protect the town as an important historical site and is seeking to have it declared as a UNESCO cultural heritage site.

#### Xiche Town

Xiche (西车) Town is another place of interest in the Wuling area. It is named after the Xiche River - "Xiche" comes from a Tujia dialect word meaning "grass river" - because of the luxuriant fragrant grasses along the river's banks.

Xiche Town dates back to the reign of the Emperor Yongzheng.

The architecture of Xiche features both the exquisite Tujia and the traditional Han architectural styles which add to the dynamic beauty of the town. Along the river banks there are tall diaojiaolou (吊脚楼), houses suspended on wooden stilts.

Fengyu Bridge (风雨桥), also called "Pavilion Bridge" by the locals, is a wood and stone bridge crossing the Xiche River. Long and comfortable chairs are placed along the bridge for rest and sightseeing.

Dahé Bridge (大河桥), a parallel bridge several hundred meters from Fengyu Bridge, and Xiaohé Bridge (小河桥) on the Mengxi River (梦溪) - both modern structures - are good viewing points from which to look over the whole town.

On the other side of Fengyu Bridge is Dongping Street (东坪街), a 100-metre-long flagstone street where stores dealing in tobacco products, numerous bean curd varieties and other traditional foods do a thriving trade.

Guandi Temple (关帝庙) is the only really ancient structure in the town, dating from 220-280 AD. The temple is inside a siheyuan which itself is right in the middle of a street which flows around it. The teahouse opposite the wide courtyard can hold hundreds of people.

At the corner of Wanzi Street (湾子街), which faces the river, a suspension building stands out sharply high up on a rock.

It is well worth taking a walk down Wanzi Street to the riverbank for a good view of Fengyu Bridge, the stilted buildings, the port and the fast flowing river.



A stele in Baoguo Temple erected on the order of Emperor Qianlong.

Photo by Wang Yong

## BAOGUO TEMPLE

towards the north, so Baoguo Temple suddenly found itself in the south part of the city. In the Chenghua period during the Ming Dynasty, on the orders of Empress Zhou, whose brother renounced the family to become a monk in Baoguo Temple, Da Renchi Temple (大仁慈寺) was built in the south-east corner of the Temple. This made the temple famous all over the country. In the period of Emperor Qianlong, the temples were reconstructed and re-named Da Baoguo Renchi Temple. After that, Emperor Guangxu published an imperial edict to reconstruct the Zhaozhong Shrine (昭忠祠) (it was originally in Chongwenmen, but was destroyed in an incident) in Baoguo

Temple. Thus, the temple was renamed again, this time as Zhaozhong Shrine. But among local people it has always been called Baoguo Temple.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the country's Food Ministry was settled in the temple. Now it no longer attracts a large number of pilgrims and is better known for its coin market. In the front part, a coin exhibition is currently being held. As well as coins, ancient vases and mirrors are on display in the middle of the courtyard.

**Where:** NO.1 Guang'an Men Nei Da Jie (广安门内大街), Xuanwu District

**Add:** Tickets are free.